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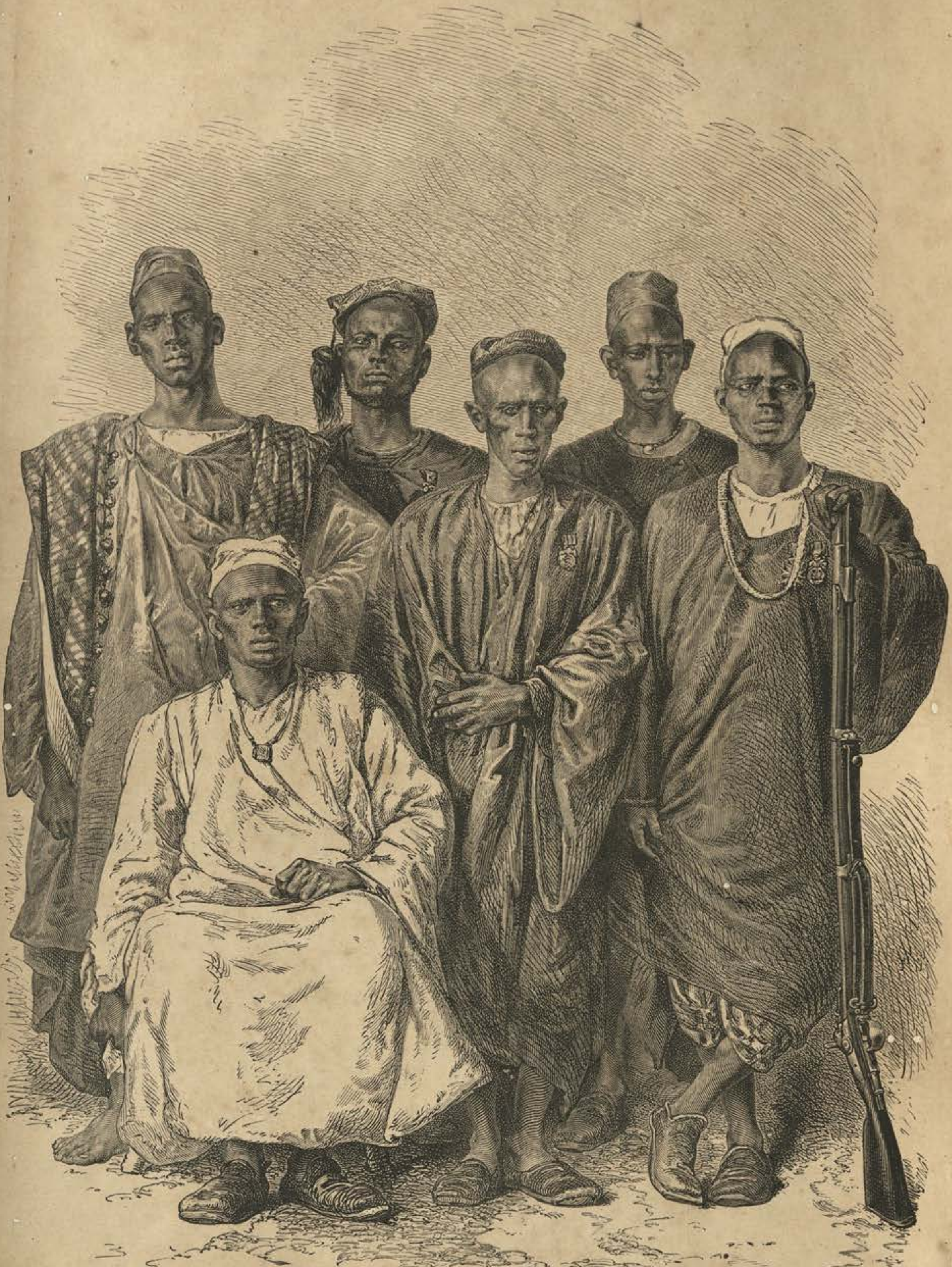

A GROUP OF MOHAMMEDAN AFRICAN CHIEFS.

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THE

RACES OF MANKIND

BEING

A POPULAR DESCRIPTION OF THE CHARACTERISTICS, MANNERS AND
CUSTOMS OF THE PRINCIPAL VARIETIES OF

THE HUMAN FAMILY.

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THE RACES OF MANKIND.

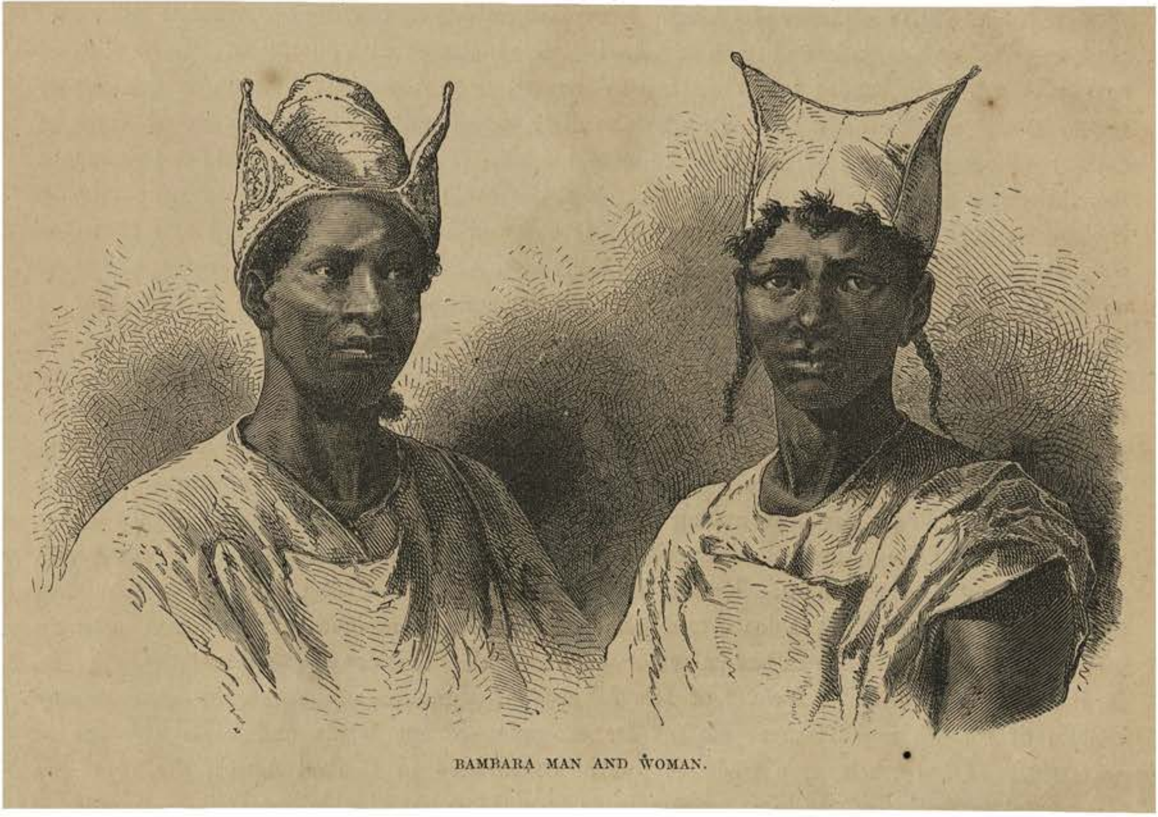
CHAPTER I.

CENTRAL AFRICA: ETIQUETTE, CRUELTY, FILTHINESS, &C.

IN opening our third volume, we will, before introducing the natives of Western Africa to the reader, continue our brief account of a few of the more interesting social manners, domestic and political institutions of the inhabitants of the Central Region. After this we will notice a few of the tribes which are still undescribed, proceeding from the coast to the interior.

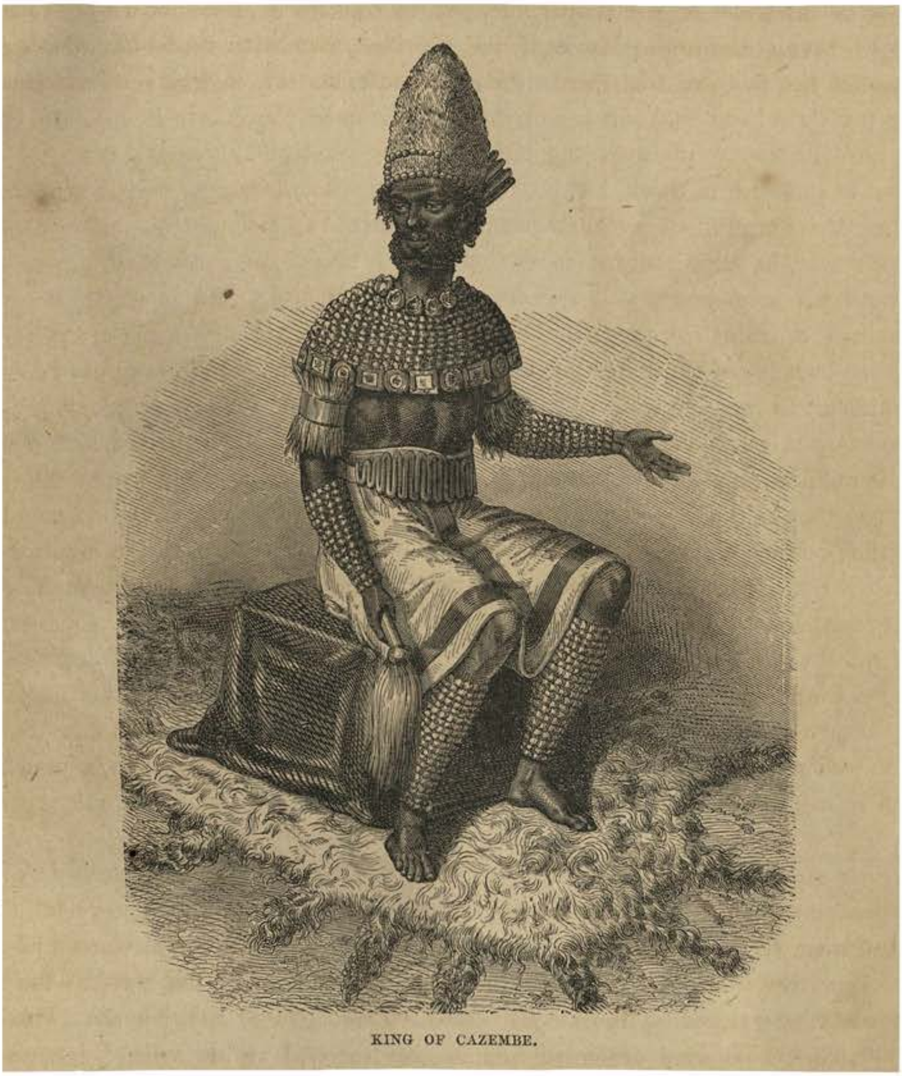
Etiquette.—Among the Weeze the mode of saluting a chief is for his inferiors to blow themselves and clap their hands twice, while the women, in addition, salute by making a curtsey. The petty chief receives the same obeisance, the bowing and curtseying, however, being in their case omitted. When two women meet, and one is of inferior rank to the other, the inferior drops on one knee and bends her head. The superior then lays her hands on the inferior's shoulders, and after remaining in this posture for some time, and whispering some words in an undertone; they then—the demands of a rigid etiquette having been satisfied—stand together, and converse freely. When a Watusi, among whom Captain Grant met the dusky beauty (vol. ii., p. 312), meets a friend, he holds out the knobbed end of a five-foot stick, which he always carries. This done, no further courtesy is necessary, and they pass on, or talk together, as the case may be. The Weeze look upon the Watusi with profound respect, and when the former meets a member of the latter tribe he presses the palms of his hands together, while the Watusi returns the compliment by gently clasping them within his own, muttering at the same time some words, which were unintelligible to Captain Grant. This method of salutation is almost the exact equivalent of the old Norman mode of receiving the submission of a vassal, "putting his hands within his and calling him lord." A Weeze woman is not less polite to the Watusi man. If she meet a member of the more honourable tribe, instantly her arms fall prone by her side, while the Watusi on his part presses them for a little time with his hands, just below the shoulders. Among the Wagonda, if a superior has occasion to present anything to an inferior, he pats and rubs it with his hands, finally stroking each cheek with it, the object of this elaborate ceremony being to stave off witchcraft and the mischief of the "evil eye" from the donor. Among the tribe just named, the etiquette in regard to the dress of each rank is even stricter than was enacted by the sumptuary laws prevailing in reference to this in England during the middle ages. The least infringement of the laws in regard to dress, salutation, sitting or standing before the king, &c., is punished with most cruel death, the people being under such subjection to their despotic rulers that no one would dare to take the least notice of the occurrence. The skin of the serval—a species of leopard cat—can only be worn by those of royal descent. The king wears his hair in the shape of a cock's comb on the crown of his head, the rest being shaved off, and though the privilege is on rare occasions extended to a favourite queen, the least attempt to imitate it on the part of a subject would be the signal for his instant execution. *Instant* did I say? It would be merciful was this the case, but, on the contrary, the favourite method of execution adopted by King M'tesa (who in all likelihood still lives, for during Speke's visit he was a very young man) was to gradually disembowel the unhappy offender in order to feed his tame vultures. Occasionally he would be merciful, and order the prisoners to be previously killed, but as frequently as not this was a preliminary entirely neglected. Another common method of slow death was to cut the body gradually to pieces with the sharp stiff blades of a coarse grass, it being also contrary to Wagonda etiquette to use knives to dismember a victim.

The courtiers shave off all their hair, except a tuft like a cockade at the back of the head, while the demoniacal imps of pages wear two of these cockades, though as a rule they cover their heads with turbans. It is accounted indecorous to offer anything to the king in an uncovered state; a piece of gaily pattern "chinze" had even to be covered before the royal eyes could in private gaze upon it. Among the Wahuma, no one dare stand before the king, be he sitting or standing, but must approach him with downcast eyes and bended knees, and sit or kneel while in his presence. To touch the king's clothes or his throne, even by accident, or to look upon his women, is certain death. "When sitting in court holding a levee," writes Captain Speke, "the king invariably has in attendance several women—'Wabandwa,' evil-eye averters, or sorcerers. They talk in feigned voices, raised to a shrillness almost amounting to a scream. They wear dried lizards on their heads, small goat-skin aprons trimmed with little bells, diminutive shields and spears set off with cock-hackles; their functions in attendance being to administer cups of Marwa (plantain wine). To complete the picture of the court, one must imagine a crowd of pages to run royal messages; they dare not walk, for such a deficiency in zeal to their master might cost their life. A further feature of the court consists in the national symbols—a dog, two spears, and a shield." The court ceremonials are grand in the extreme, and would be dignified were they not too ludicrous in European eyes to command respect. Possibly the Wagandans might entertain a similar opinion of court ceremonies in a more northern latitude. Be that as it may, His Majesty of Uganda is a great, and—in a happily limited sphere—a very potent personage. He even disdains, except on certain occasions, to walk like common mortals, but retires in a peculiar prancing walk intended to imitate the gait of the lion. Rapid and impetuous as are the people of Uganda in their mode of addressing each other, all questions to the king must be delivered through the medium of one of his officers. In Uganda no stranger is allowed to call on any one but the king; the object of this rule not being, however, a sacrifice to etiquette or court punctiliousness, but simply that His Majesty may have the fleecing of the visitor entirely to himself. All the African people are fond of metaphor, and though the king may have a sufficiently extended idea of the return to be expected from any present he may make to any traveller whom ill-chance has delivered into his hands, he will be sure not to express this opinion in words. On the contrary, he will depreciate his gift in every way. "Here is a chicken for you," will be the message when a fat cow is presented, and, of course, if the traveller is a man of discrimination, he will, on returning to the royal treasury a bundle of clothes, simple designate his present as "a trifle for the king's servants." Never were there such an arrant race of courtiers—such inborn sycophants, as exist in Central Africa. Originally through fear, and latterly through custom, which has grown to be a second nature, especially when the knife of the executioner is for ever before their eyes to stimulate good manners, everybody pays the most truckling and slavish homage to the boy whom fate has set over them in the semblance of a king. Everything which he has, does, or, what is still rarer, is given away by him, is looked upon as sacred—indeed, almost with adoration. To be allowed to speak to him on bended knees and with downcast eyes is considered as an honour almost too great for man to bear. To speak to the dirty rascal without being bid would never be dreamt of—or if dreamt of, it would be once for all. The executioner would see to such a henious crime never being repeated. At times, the court is very hilarious, the mirth being continually kept up by a court-jester, whose life one would imagine must hang by a thread of wonderous tenuity. A word out of season is a life lost. Let a person carry a message to court on behalf of a traveller. He can by no means be certain that it will be delivered, for no one dare speak until he is spoken to. Let the contrary be the case, and at a sign, the imps of pages will in an instant unloose their turban organs, and springing on the culprit like so many beagles, will have him bound and led to execution almost before the crowd can be aware of his crime. Not only must no one speak to royalty, unspoken to, but there are certain subjects the discussion of which are forbidden—it is needless to say, on pain of death, for there is hardly any other penalty even among the people themselves. Thus, no one dare talk of the royal pedigree, of the countries that have been conquered, or of those that are yet to be conquered, *i.e.*, of the neighbouring ones. Equally is it penal to visit the king's guests, or be visited by them without leave. It is death to any one intentionally or accidentally to be seen casting a glance at the king's women in the palace or when abroad. This does not exhaust the category, for it is expressly forbidden for any of His Majesty of Uganda's subjects to be seen with any articles of foreign manufacture—clothes for example—except beads and brass-wire in his possession. Of a truth, free trade is yet in its infancy in Central Africa, the capacious commercial capacities of the king monopolising everything out of which profit is to be made—or rather which his subjects cannot live in decent comfort or prosperity without. The king from his childhood is surrounded by abject slaves who obey his most unreasonable caprices. As he grows older all his evil passions find full vent, and his most demoniacal acts are treated with flattery the most gross—as acts almost too noble for even kings to do. The result is an African despot—the most disgusting of his race. He will issue an order without even thinking whether it can be obeyed, and a minute afterwards another directly counter to it, and yet if they are not both carried out simultaneously, a life or a score of lives—for the number is to him a matter of the most perfect indifference—will be the sacrifice for the laws of nature unfortunately not allowing of two bodies being in the same space at the same time. Let us take a mild example: Speke, in answer to the king's inquiry as to the composition of gunpowder, began with sulphur (Kibriti), intending to go on and explain the ingredients and their manipulation in the process of manufacture, *seriatim.* "But the word 'Kibriti' was enough for him, and a second stick was sent for Kibriti, the bearer being told to hurry for his life, and fetch it. The king now ordered some high officers, who were waiting, to approach. They came, almost crouching to their knees, with eyes averted from the women; and 'n'yanzigged,' for the favour of being called, till they streamed with perspiration. Four young women, virgins, the daughters of these high officers, nicely dressed, were shown in as brides, and ordered to sit with the other women. A gamekeeper brought in baskets of small antelopes, called mpéo, with straight horns, resembling those of the *Saltiana*, but with coats like the hog-deer of India, intended for the royal kitchen. Elderly gentlemen led in goats as commutation for offences, and went through the ceremonies due for the favour of being relieved of so much property. Ten cows were then driven in, plundered from Unyoro, and outside, the voices of the brave army who captured them were heard 'n'yanzigging' vehemently. Lastly, some beautifully-made shields were presented, and, became extolled, 'n'yanzigged' over; when the king rose abruptly, and walked straight away, leaving my fools of men no better off for food, or reparation for their broken heads, than if I had never gone there."



BAMBARA MAN AND WOMAN.

It is impossible to sketch in fewer words the picture of the aimless, unsettled, cruel, sensual despotism of a petty Central African court. Though a glance of displeasure is enough to send a queen to execution, yet there are ever applicants enough for the honour of sharing the good graces of an African potentate. While Speke was at Uganda he noted the practice, mentioned in the paragraph quoted, more than once. For instance, while at court on one occasion, he observed twenty naked maidens, the daughters of Wakungŭ, all smeared and shining with grease, each holding a small square of mbŭgŭ as an apron, marched before the king, while the happy fathers grovelled in the dust as they thanked the king for accepting their offspring as an addition to his already well-stocked harem. After the African candidates for matrimony had been marched in front of the husband of which an infinitesimal portion was theirs, a sedate old dame rose from among the squatting mass of women and ordered them to the right-about, showing their figures to more advantage. If the wives of M'tesa were treated indifferently well, even when their lives were spared, the guards who stood at his palace gate were treated even worse. Their "rations" were distributed to them by a piece of beef and some plantains being thrown to them, when they were at liberty to scramble for it, each snatching what he could, just as a parcel of dogs might have done, only with this exception, that King M'tesa's dogs at least, were treated infinitely better. Lastly, we may conclude these notes on Central African etiquette and court life by mentioning that in Wagunda it is accounted indecorous to call upon two people in one day, and that the Gani consider it impolitic to appear armed in the



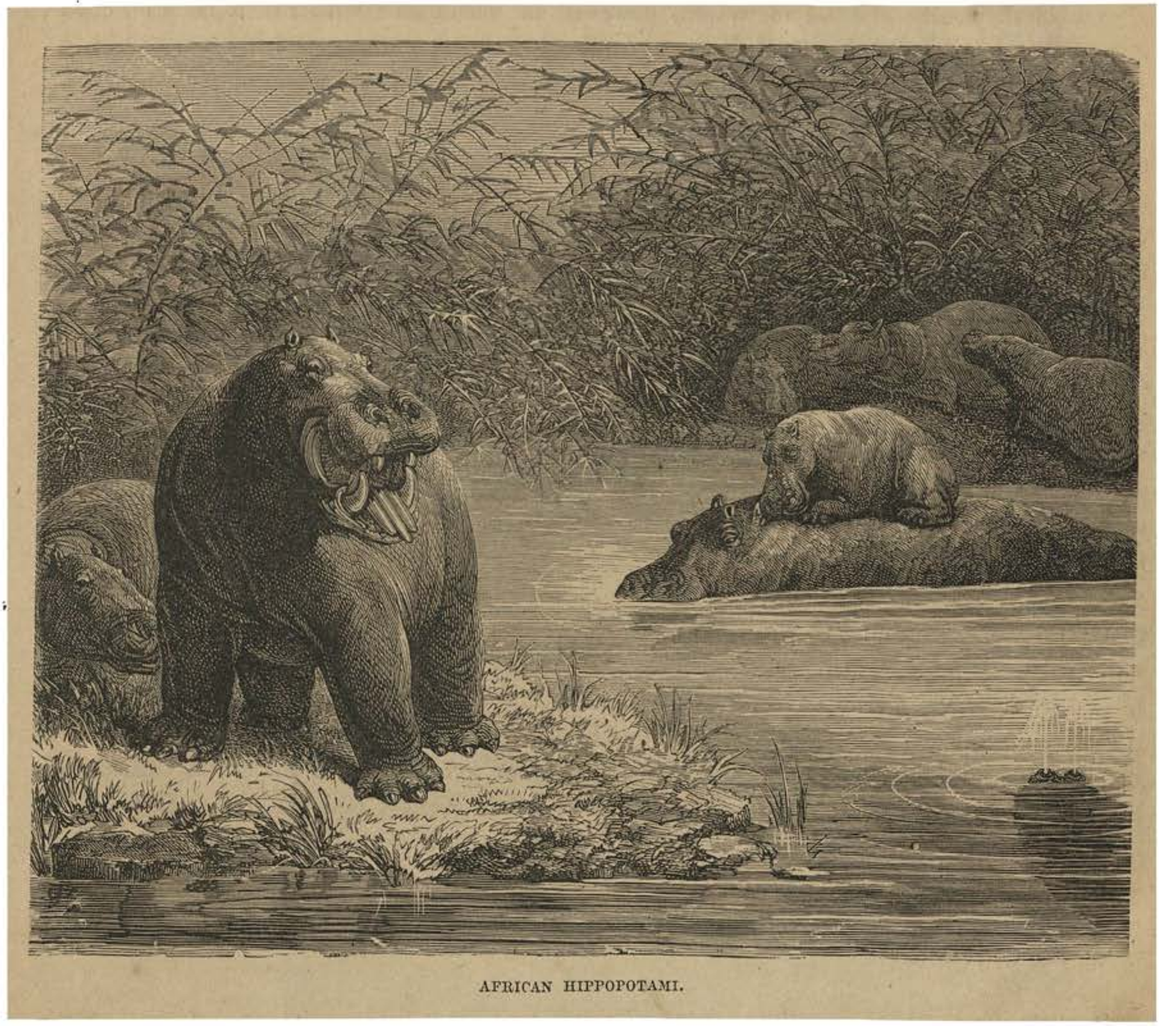
KING OF CAZEMBE.

presence of a superior. Their mode of receiving a guest is rather peculiar. He is met outside the village by the chief, his councillors, &c., laden with a fowl, a pot of beer, and a bunch of flowering plants. The fowl is swung, after some mystic rites, by the chief and councillors. The plants are then dipped in the beer and the guest sprinkled with it, after which, seated on cow-skins, he is refreshed with the beer, which, in the usual modest African metaphor, is styled *water*. The Nuehr tribes on the White Nile, portraits of some of whom we have engraved in vol. ii., p. 217, have, according to Mr. Petherick, a *rather peculiar* method of saluting a stranger. A chief entered the cabin of that gentleman's Nile boat, and kneeled on one knee, after which, "grasping my right hand, and turning up the palm, he quietly spat into it, and then, looking in my face, he deliberately repeated the process. Staggered at the man's audacity, my first impulse was to knock him down, but his features expressing kindness only, I vented my rage by returning the compliment with all possible interest. His delight seemed excessive, and, resuming his seat, he expressed his conviction that I must be a great chief. Similar salutes followed with his attendants, and friendship was established." In one form or another a similar method of saluting prevails among several tribes, though some are polite enough (according to our ways of thinking) not to spit in the hand, but only to pretend to do so.

It is difficult to imagine what can have been the origin of such an extraordinary custom. Kissing seems natural, having begun, as Steele naïvely puts it, "with the first courtship," though it is unknown to the Australians, New Zealanders, Papuans, and savage Eskimo, who rub noses together as the hyperborean way of saying "How d'y'do?" though it may be noted that after they become civilised they also take, with no small avidity, to the civilised method of salutation. Some people show their admiration by hissing, while a greater number express by this only contempt. Many we have seen sit or crouch in the presence of a superior, though in civilised life to stand is considered more polite. A European takes off his hat when before his guests; a Chinaman considers that he honours them by clapping his on his head in their presence. It is not, however, always safe to take the Mongol as a type of etiquette, for he considers no gift more appropriate to an aged relative than a first-class coffin, a present, however, which in western circles would be considered more practically appropriate than polite.

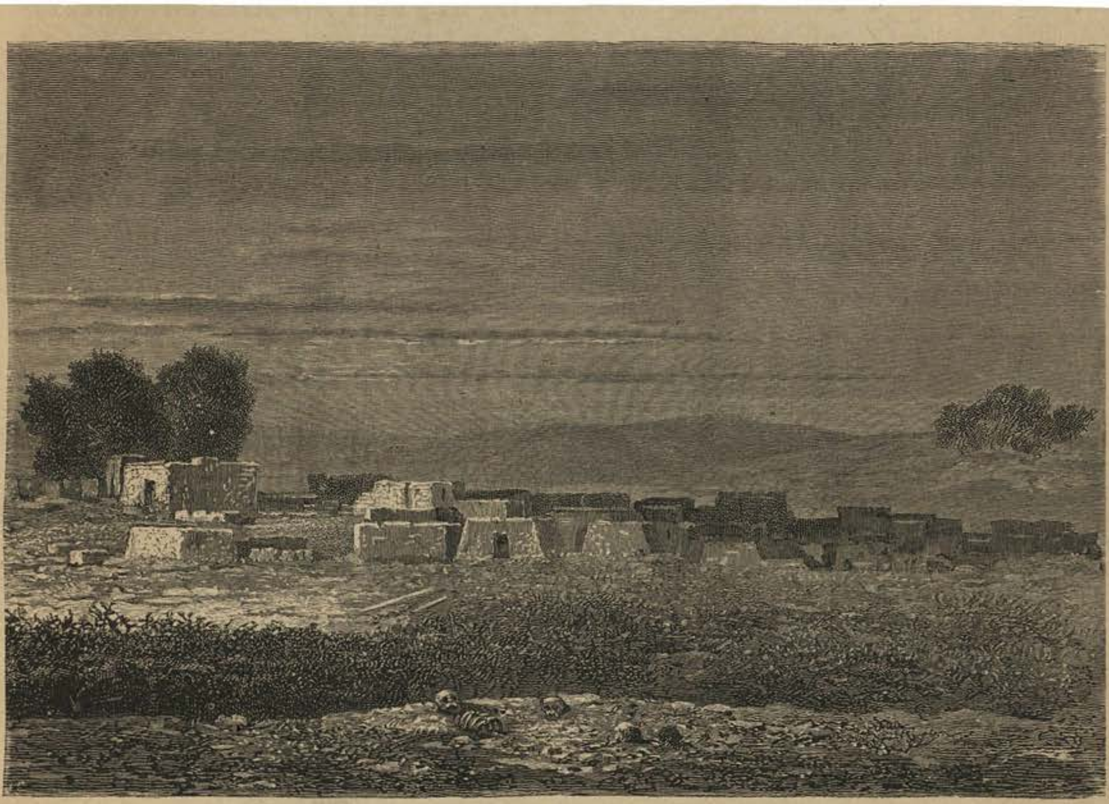
Cruelty is almost invariably the characteristic of a despot, and is a marked feature in the African character. No value whatever is put upon life. A whim, a caprice, a trifling fault, or a temporary irritation of any kind on the part of one of these black kings is the signal for one of their subjects being led to execution. Matiamvo, the chief of the Bolondo tribe, who was of great aid to the rascally slave-traders, used to adopt a speedy method of thinning his tribe. When a dealer in human stock arrived at his village, he was in the habit of sending out a party of armed men to attack some of his own villages, killing the head men, and giving the inhabitants to the slavers in return for their goods. On the smallest provocation—such as being refused some trifle—he would destroy a whole village until he got sufficient plunder to tempt the owner of the coveted article to part with it, if not powerful enough to take it by force. He was a believer in the Malthusian doctrines, and considered that his people were much too numerous to be prosperous, and that unless they were thinned off speedily, want would be the fate of the tribe. Accordingly, acting on this theory, he would start off and run through his town, decapitating everybody he met, until a pile of human heads attested his philanthropy and the firmness with which the insane ruffian stuck to his philosophical doctrines. Though they do not, as a rule, torture prisoners captured in war—either killing them outright, or disposing of them as slaves (which is the more lucrative and popular method of treating them), yet culprits are, as we have seen, often tortured in the most inhuman manner. M'tesa, the Waganda king whom we have already so frequently referred to, would, however, in accordance with his capricious cruel character, torture a soldier, who had shown cowardice, in a most inhuman manner, such as boring holes in his body with red-hot irons, and in other methods almost too horrible to believe. How this worthy treated his wives we have already seen. Feeling for none of them any passion akin to love, and having abundance of them, he was no way backward to thin his harem now and then. In this blood-stained court scarcely a day elapsed during Speke's stay, in which one, two, or three of the wretched palace women were not dragged off to execution, crying in plaintive tones, as the executioner led them out of the royal precincts—"Hai Minangé!" (Oh, my Lord!) "Kbakka!" (My king!) "Hai N'yawo!" (My mother!). But all their cries and lamentations were in vain. They fell upon deaf ears, and so far as any hand dared be lifted to save them they might as well have pleaded with the palace walls. Yet many could be heard privately commenting on their beauty, though familiarity with such scenes had so accustomed them to look upon such an affair as a matter of course, that it is dubious if any further commiseration was excited in the spectators at the time than a regret that His Majesty should be so extravagant as to sacrifice such a piece of valuable property in this reckless manner! On another occasion, when on one of his hunting or rather sort of picnic excursions, a favourite wife handed a fruit to the young king, which liberty so incensed the tyrant that he ordered her to immediate execution. In a moment the beagle-like pages sprang upon her to bind her with their turban cords, and though she stoutly defended herself, and her appeal for mercy was backed by the king sisters on their bended knees before him, she would most assuredly have been sacrificed, had not Captain Speke begged her life. The idea of anybody taking sufficient interest in the preservation of a human being's existence, on the plea of mercy, so tickled the boy-brute, that he instantly granted the white man's request and let her go free. The king's attendants are naked girls, who are, however, not admitted into the ranks of the harem, nor will the king bestow any of his superfluities of women on the greatest of his subjects, no matter how much he might wish to honour them, in case these ex-wives might divulge court secrets.

Filthiness in their person and habits is also too general a characteristic of the Central Africans. Take, for example, the Obbo and Bari of the White Nile. Baker informs us that he had the greatest difficulty in inducing his Obbo cow-keeper to abandon the disgusting national habit of washing the milk-bowl with cow's urine, and even of mixing some with the milk. The man was, however, not without his excuse. Unless, he declared, he washed his hands with such water before milking, the cow would lose her milk. The Obbo natives wash out their mouths equally offensively, a custom which Baker considers might have originated in the total absence of salt in their country. But to show how different from each other are the most near neighbours in Africa, it is expressly noted that the Latookas (vol. ii., p. 215) are very cleanly in their habits, and that milk could be purchased from them in their own vessels without fear. In other respects the African tribes differ widely from each other. Nor does proximity afford the slightest clue to the probability of two tribes having similar habits, or being equally wealthy. Take the Kytchs of the White Nile for example. Since Baker's description they have obtained the unpleasant pre-eminence of being perhaps the most miserable tribe on the African continent. They are a nation of "living skeletons," though Baker notes that amongst them he saw the best-looking girl he had ever seen in a black tribe. Her dress was simple enough—merely a little bit of dressed hide a foot wide slung across her shoulders, all other parts being exposed. This Negro beauty, being the chief's daughter, had more dress, however—scanty as it was—than the other girls of the country, who merely wear a circlet of "little iron jingling ornaments around their waists." All the men, though tall, were miserably thin; the children mere skeletons, and the whole tribe thoroughly starved. Unlike most of the African tribes, they trust entirely to nature for their subsistence, and will spend hours digging out field-mice from their burrows, in order to use them as food. "They are," writes Baker, "the most pitiable set of savages that can be imagined; so emaciated, that they have no visible posteriors,



AFRICAN HIPPOPOTAMI.

they look as though they had been planed off; and their long thin legs and arms give them a peculiar gnat-like appearance. At night they crouch close to the fires, lying in the smoke to escape the clouds of mosquitoes. At this season the country is a vast swamp, the only dry spots being the white ant-hills; in such places the natives herd like wild animals, simply rubbing themselves with wood ashes to keep out the cold. So miserable are the natives of the Kytch tribe, that they devour both skins and bones of all dead animals; the bones are pounded between stones, and when reduced to powder they are boiled to a kind of porridge; nothing is left for a fly to feed upon, when an animal either dies a natural death, or is killed. I never pitied poor creatures more than these utterly destitute savages; their method of returning thanks is by holding your hand and *affecting* to spit upon it; which operation they do not actually perform, as I have seen stated in works upon the White Nile (p. 6). Their domestic arrangements are peculiar. Polygamy is of course allowed, as in all other hot climates and savage countries; but when a man becomes too old to pay sufficient attention to his numerous young wives, the eldest son takes the place of his father and becomes his substitute. To every herd of cattle there is a sacred bull, which is supposed to exert an influence over the prosperity of the flocks; his horns are ornamented with tufts of feathers, and frequently with small bells, and he invariably leads the great herd to pasture. On starting in the early morning from the cattle kraal, the natives address the bull, telling him to watch over the herd; to keep the cows



MUD VILLAGE OF THE WEEZE.

from straying; and to lead them into the sweetest pastures, so that they shall give abundance of milk, &c." *

The Negroid Central African nations have never advanced perceptibly, and show no sign of progress. Doubtless they were once even more savage, but in the unnumbered ages that have elapsed since they settled down in the basin of the Nile and its sources, they ought to have attained to something greater than it seems they ever will. The country is always so disturbed, that, fertile as it is, and of such boundless capabilities, the Central African is always too much occupied with the thoughts of food for the morrow to be able to devote sufficient care to anything nobler. I fear that Speke only speaks too truly when he declares that there seems no hope for the Central African except being replaced by a superior race, unless, indeed, a Government, such as we have established in India, was placed over them. But even that would not suffice. The old Hindoo Governments were established by races infinitely higher in the intellectual scale than any African people. At no period were they probably ever so degraded, though ruled scarcely less despotically. As an African father "did, so does he. He works his wife, sells his children, enslaves all he can lay his hands on, and, unless when fighting for the property of others, contents himself with smoking, singing, and dancing like a baboon, to drive dull care away. A few only make cotton cloths, or work in wool, iron, copper, or salt, their rule being to do as little as possible, and to store up nothing beyond the necessities of the next season, lest their chiefs or neighbours seek, covet, and take it from them." In a word, the Central African is afflicted with total want of foresight, and a constitutional indolence that is so appalling that even the climate will not account for it. Unstable as water, the African race will never prevail in anything worthy of the name of civilisation.

CHAPTER II.

THE CENTRAL AFRICANS: DRESS, FOOD, HOUSES, GOVERNMENT, &C.

A limited wardrobe, such as befits the climate, may in a brief manner be stated as the general characteristic of African dress. What little they wear is, however, in many cases peculiar enough to merit a few words, and is, in many cases, combined with an extraordinary furor for improving on nature by disturbing their otherwise not particularly handsome countenances.

Among the Manganjas, for example, it is the head upon which the greatest elaboration is bestowed. The most favourite form of dressing the hair, is to take a couple of pieces of wet pliable hide, and shape them into the form of ox or buffalo horns, after which they are allowed to dry. They are then fastened at either side of the forehead, and the hair trained over them, and plastered into position by means of grease and clay. Two horns are the favourite ornament, but sometimes only one is used; in the latter case the wearer looks like a black bipedal unicorn.

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* "Albert N'Yanza" (new edition), p. 49.

Others vary this style of hair-dressing by twisting up a number of locks all over the head into the shape of miniature horns, so as to cause a porcupine-like appearance in the practiser of this extraordinary style of headdress. Pig-tails, so far as their short "wool" will allow, are also in vogue among some of this tribe. The women, as might be expected, are also by no means without fastidiousness in dressing and ornamenting their hair, but this is quite over-shadowed by another effort at beautifying in which they excel—viz., in wearing the "pelele" or ring of ivory, metal, or bamboo, measuring twenty-two inches across, in their upper lip, the orifice for its reception being gradually enlarged from early girlhood, until it can receive the full-sized ring, which, among the Manganja belles constitutes the acme of female loveliness made perfect. The wearing of this hideous ornament (as in the cases which we have already noted of similar implements, vol. i., p. 102) alters the whole appearance of the face, and renders it impossible for the women to pronounce the labial letters. Hence a woman in this tribe speaks differently from the men. On p. 216 vol. ii. we have figured a Zambesi damsel with this strange "ornament," and the artist has by no means exaggerated the effects produced by it; the girl being rather comely, indeed appears more favourably than the majority of her sisters. Some of the women even tatoo, but owing to the darkness of their skin this mode of skin decoration cannot get shown to advantage, and is not very popular. It is not pleasant to record of a nation so fond of dress that they seemed to be entirely unconscious that in civilised eyes cleanliness is a virtue which ranks even higher than tatooing. They are filthy in the extreme. One old man denied that it was true that he had never washed himself; he had *really* done so once, but it was so long ago that he could not trust his memory to say how many years had elapsed since that notable event. It is almost superfluous to add that skin diseases are, in consequence, common amongst them, and exhibit most persistent and virulent forms.

The Banyai, another Zambesi tribe, divide the hair into tufts, around which they twist some vegetable fibre to keep them in position, and allow them to hang down upon their shoulders.

The Weeze women are better dressed than the men, a characteristic by no means of general application to savage tribes. They wear a large cotton cloth, made by themselves, in which they envelope the whole body from below the shoulders, while their limbs are perfectly encased in an armour of rings, to the extent of six or seven inches above the ankles and wrists.* Tatooing is also to a very slight extent practised amongst them. The men, though deficient in dress when compared with the women, are yet great dandies after their own fashion. Round their loins a cloth is worn. When travelling they wear a goatskin stretched from one shoulder to the other, under which it is secured. It is, perhaps, this indulgence in finery over their lords that has made the Weeze women so good-natured and contented. They have nothing to "nag" at, or get cross-grained in sticking up for their "rights" (of which no African woman is burdened with too many), and, accordingly, the energy which would have possibly been spent in a virtual though underhand advocacy of female suffrage, is devoted to making their husbands comfortable, by making themselves tidy, his house neat, and preparing for him, whether at home or on the march, savoury food with wondrously little materials. The men, in nearly every respect, ornament themselves like the women, only they content themselves with having massive bracelets of copper or brass on the wrists instead of a long coil of wire up the arm; they also carry about with them a spear and bow and arrows. All extract more or less their lower incisors, and cut an Λ between the two upper incisors. They were always very anxious to have Lady Baker manipulated by the native dentists, her only fault on the score of beauty being the presence of her teeth intact. Of course her white face was

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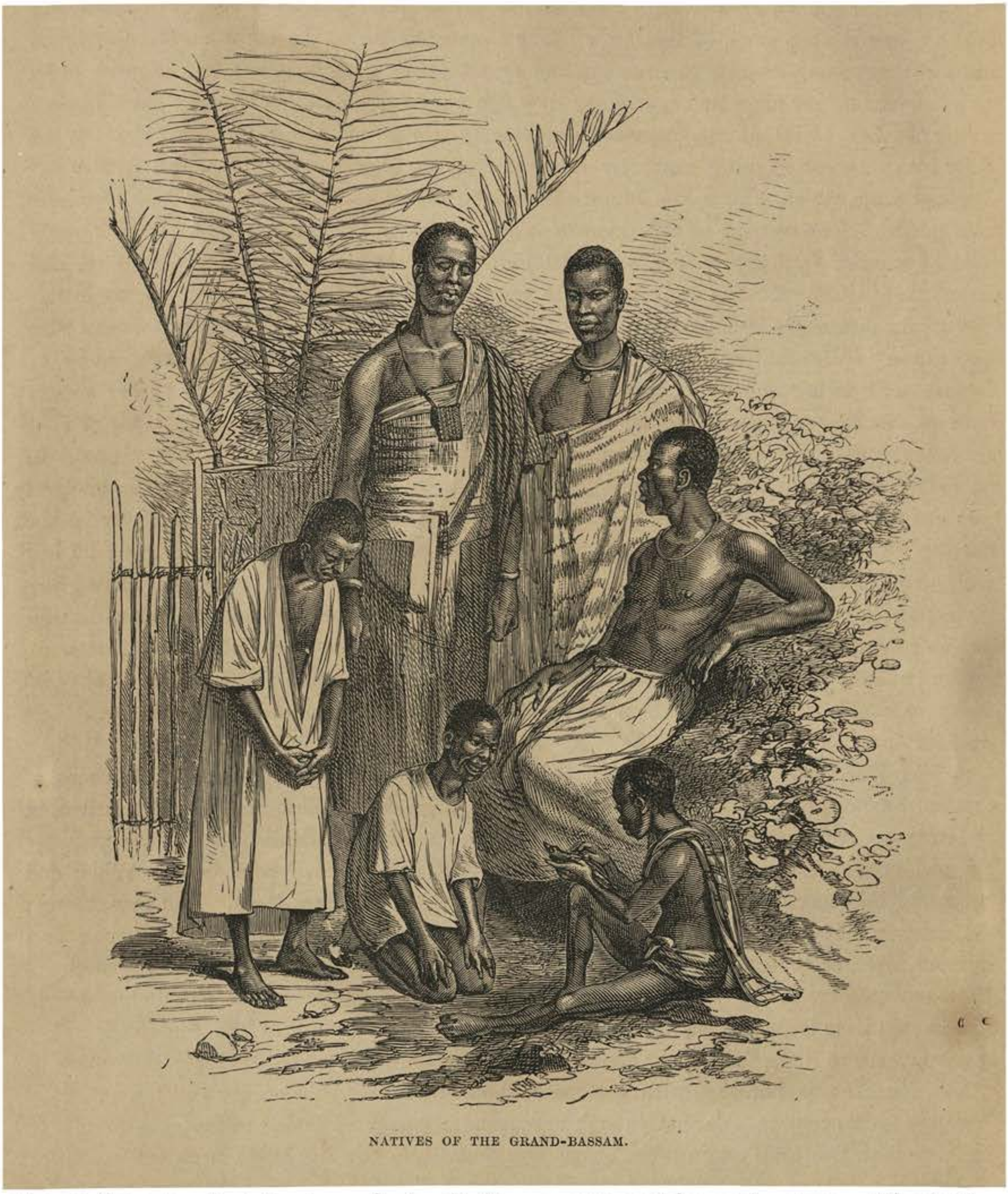
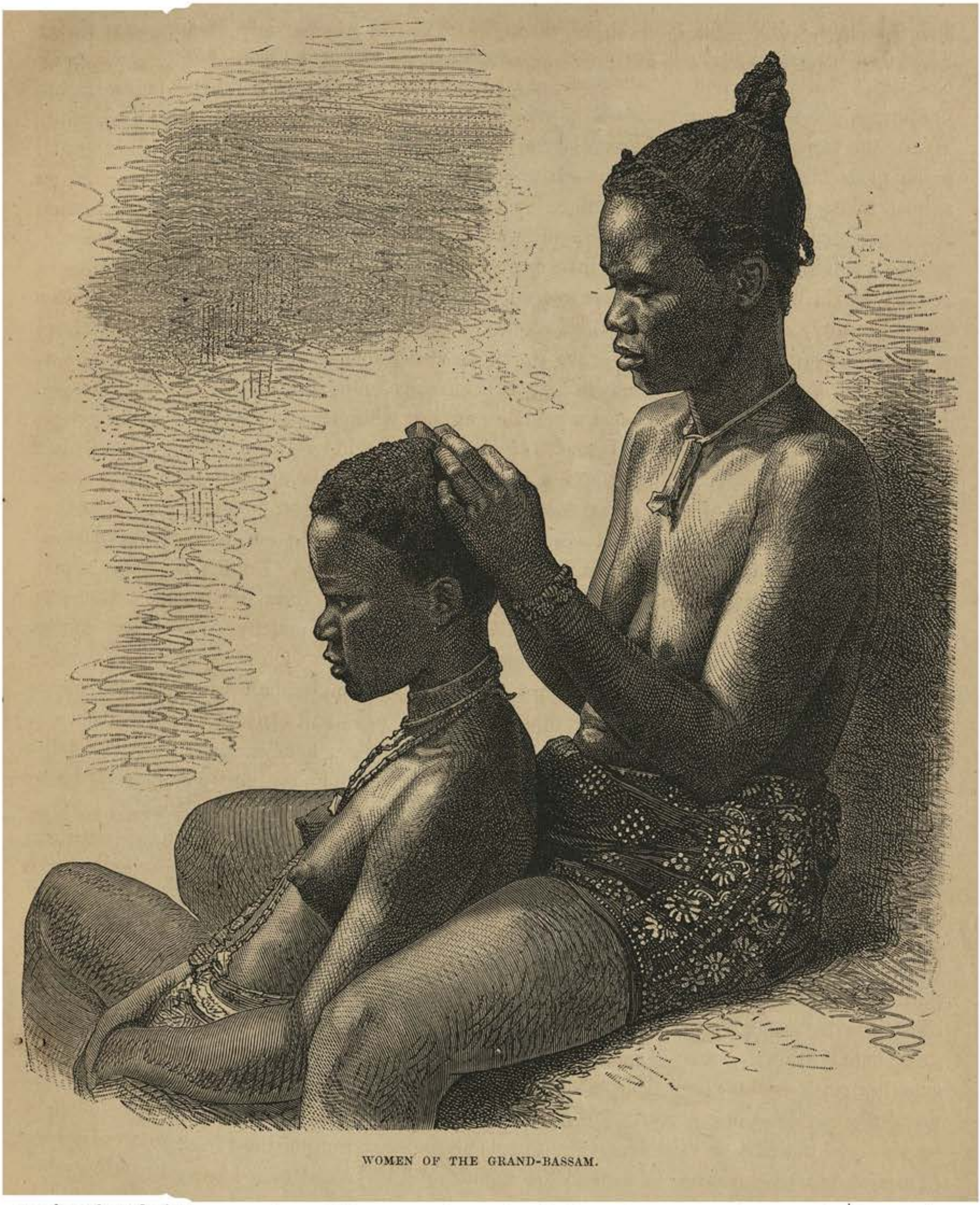
* These rings or bracelets are made of brass or copper, but more frequently, as in this case, of "sambo," or giraffe's tail hairs bound round by the thinnest iron or copper wire.



NATIVES OF THE GRAND-BASSAM.



WOMEN OF THE GRAND-BASSAM.

against her, but that was her misfortune and not her fault, and, much as it was to be deplored, could not be remedied, while the other defect could and ought to be. A custom almost universal among the African tribes is to rub their naked bodies over with grease until it shines. This fashion prevails both in the interior and on the coast, and is probably due to the grease acting both as a protection against the sun's rays and against cold, for naked men have all the world over celebrated in their proverbial philosophy that "dirt and grease are the poor man's clothing." They are not at all particular as to the grease used; rancid butter is not uncommonly used, and if not rancid it soon becomes so when transferred to the negro skin. Hence the varied but ever detestable odours which greet the uneducated nose of the traveller as he plods his weary way across the African continent. They will tear the tallow out of an animal killed in order to use the grease for this purpose, and an admirable story—whether strictly true or not it is hardly worth inquiring too closely—is told of a native, whose desire to possess a shining skin overruled any little honesty he might have been possessed of, stealing a pot of varnish under the idea that it was oil, and dressing his sable skin with it. The result was not entirely satisfactory. The thief, resplendent in his odoriferous coat of varnish, landed while a cloud of wind was blowing. The consequence was that in a short space of time he was the observed of all observers, his body looking as if enveloped in a tight-fitting suit of sandpaper. He is understood for long to have had a prejudice against white men and all their crooked ways.

The dress of His Majesty of Uganda, of whose ways of life we have spoken already more than once, was gorgeous. When Speke saw him first, he was sitting on a red blanket spread upon a square platform of royal grass, encased in tiger-grass reeds, scrupulously well-dressed in a new mbŭgŭ. The hair of his head was cut short, excepting on the top, where it was combed into a high ridge, running from stem to stern like a cock's comb. On his neck was a very neat ornament in a large ring of beautifully-worked small beads, forming elegant patterns by their various colours. On one arm was another bead ornament, prettily devised, and on the other a wooden charm, tied by a string covered with snake skin. On every finger and every toe he had alternate brass and copper rings, and above the ankles, half-way up to the calf, a stocking of very pretty beads. Everything was light, neat, and elegant in its way; not a fault could be found with the taste of his "get up." For a handkerchief, he held a well-folded piece of bark and a piece of gold-embroidered silk, which he constantly employed to hide his large mouth when laughing, or to wipe it after a drink of plantain wine, of which he took constant and copious draughts from neat little gourd cups, administered by his ladies-in-waiting, who were at once his sisters and wives. A white dog, spear, shield, and woman—the Uganda cognizana—were by his side, as also a knot of staff officers, with whom he kept up a brisk conversation on one side, and on the other was a band of Wichwéze, or lady sorcerers. Etiquette has ever a controlling say in the question of dress. In Uganda no man is allowed to appear untidily dressed. To do so before his superior would entail punishment of some sort; if he was rash enough to come into the king's presence *en déshabillé* he could not escape immediate death. No matter how great a hurry a man is in, be he page or warrior, he must hold his cloak or other garment about him lest he should expose a naked limb, all this fastidiousness affording a marked contrast to what we find among the generality of their cousins over the African continent. The guards of Kamrasi, king of the Wangoro, were dressed in a most fantastic manner in leopards' or monkeys' skins, cows' tails strapped behind, while antelopes' horns were fastened to their heads, and their chins were ornamented with long beards made out of the bushy ends of cows' tails, the corps, when on duty, yelling, screaming, and brandishing their weapons, looking, which was apparently the object of their ambition, as like demons as human beings.

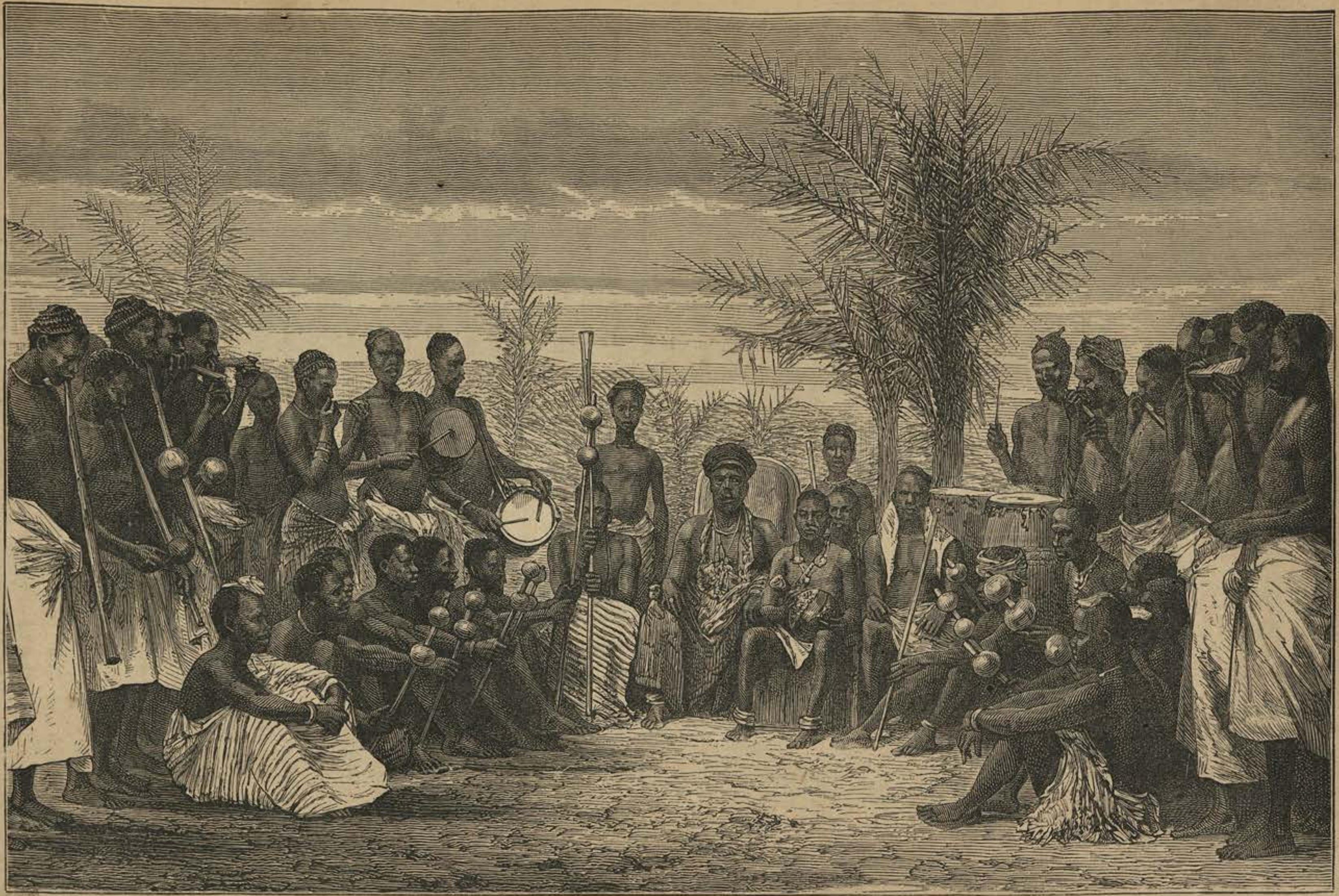
The Gani paint their faces and bodies often into horizontal stripes, or chequer-fashion, with a pigment made from wood ashes. The hair of the men of this tribe is teased out, and then plastered with clay so as to form a felt-like mass, and which is still further decorated with pipeclay laid on in various patterns. At the back of the neck is inserted a piece of sinew, decorated at the end with the tuft of hair from the tip of the leopard's tail, or some similar ornament. Lastly, shells and all sorts of knick-knacks are woven into the "thatch," which supplies the place of the original hair, as crowning embellishments. The Madi wash their children daily, and in lieu of towels lick the children dry with their tongues, an improvement on the Eskimo infantile bath, in which the tongue serves the place of both water, soap, and towel (vol. i., p. 7). After undergoing this process, the Gani mother anoints the child's body with a mixture of fat and vermillion, until the youngster is radiant and beautiful after Gani taste. Being now dressed for the day, the infant is rolled in a goat's skin, and suspended to the branch of a tree, or similar situation, where it can be out of harm's way, while the mother is occupied with her household duties. The women wear a leathern petticoat stretching to the knees, or in default of this an apron composed of leathern fringes before and behind. If this light article of "clothing" is even wanting, a bunch of chickweed is the sole article of wardrobe with which this simple race contents itself. The women also wear a belt, pieces of white shell, about the size of fourpenny pieces, strung by a hole through the middle, and which are also used as small change, while the men wear armlets made of the wild boars' tusks. The Bari, a warlike tribe situated on the eastern bank of the Nile, between latitude 4° and 8° N., though they wear but little clothing, are not deficient in a passion for personal ornamentations, on which they spend much of their time. With the exception of a tuft on the top of their heads all their hair is shaved off. To this scalp-tuft is attached some feathers, and, like some of their neighbours, they are rather fond of painting themselves when they go to war, and even when at home, in a coat of red pigment and grease. Their weapons might, like the dress-sword formerly worn in Europe, be looked upon as a part of their dress, for without their bow, arrows, and spear they never stand outside their own door.

The Obbo tribe, whose head-quarters are in lat. 4° 55′ N., and long. 31° 46′ E., disregard clothing, but concentrate their efforts upon elaborate headdresses. If a man's relative die they cut off his hair and add it to their own, so that in course of time they will have a wig shaped like a beaver's tail hanging down the back of their necks on to the shoulders, and terminated by the pigtail-like ornament which we described as common among the Gani. Caps made of shells are also in common use, and around their throats the men wear polished iron rings, a piece of jewelry which often threatens the wearer, who becomes suddenly corpulent, with suffocation. Tufts, of any size, up to that of a horse's tail, which is, indeed, in great request amongst them for that purpose, are worn suspended from the arms just above the elbow. Painting their bodies, in alternate stripes of scarlet and yellow and other gaudy patterns, is also a fashion amongst these people.

The women are scarcely clad at all, their full dress usually consisting of three or four strings of beads strung on horsehair, *and nothing else.* But this is only if they are rich. The poorer unmarried girls have no clothing whatever. Some, still more modest, will, if married, suspend a slight fringe of leather and beads, about four inches long, by two broad, from a leather belt round their waist. "The old ladies," writes Baker, who, to his loss, had an opportunity of getting only too well acquainted with the tribal manners and customs—and particularly with the manners which he thought but little of—" are antiquated Eves, whose dress consists of a string round the waist, in which is stuck a bunch of green leaves, the stalk uppermost. I have seen a few of the young girls that were prudes indulging in such garments; but they did not appear to be fashionable, and were adopted *faute de mieux.* One great advantage was possessed by this costume; it was always clean and fresh, and the nearest bush (if not thorny) provided a clean petticoat. When in the society of these very simple, and, in demeanour, always modest Eves, I could not help reflecting upon the Mosaical description of our first parents, 'and they sewed fig-leaves together.' "

The Shir men—another White Nile tribe—are remarkable for not stirring outside their village without carrying all their portable property about their person. Chief of all is their little stool, and their gaily ornamented pipe, which is decorated with iron, a valued material in the Shir country. So costly is it, that their arrows are pointed with some hard wood. The most prominent article of dress of the women is a leather lappet in front, and a tail-like appendage of leather thongs or laces depending from the belt, which supports the lappet behind. The warriors of the Djibba tribe—who inhabit a tract of country almost encircled by the Sobat, one of the Nile tributaries—wears suspended from the back of his head a long band made of plaited leathern thongs, on the under surface of which is a kind of felt made from the hair taken from the decapitated head of his slain enemy. For every enemy killed he adds to the length of this peculiar trophy, until it becomes of inordinate length and oppressive weight; and as it gets firmer and firmer attached to the head, the more the hair grows, the Djibba warrior cannot relieve himself of the burdensome minister to his vanity. In addition, goat-skin dresses —with the hairy side outwards—ivory armlets, belts of cowries, and polished iron rings around the ankles and waist, are worn by these people. Bracelets are in great favour as ornaments by all these savages. But the most horrible are those worn by the Nuehos of the White Nile. They consist of a copper ring encircling each wrist, and to each of which is attached a series of sharp recurved blades. When Jochan, the chief of this tribe—whose portrait we gave on p. 220, vol. ii.—was asked the use of these curious ornaments, he pointed significantly to his wife's back, which was scarred by the wounds inflicted by these savage implements.

We may conclude these remarks upon the dress of the Central African tribes by a few words on that of the people of Bornu, or Kanowsy, as they call themselves. This is a large and semi-civilised kingdom on the western side of lake Tchad, which embraces a number of conquered tribes, and has twelve or thirteen large cities within its boundaries. They are Mohammedans. Their common dress is an indigo-dyed blue shirt, or two or three if wealthy enough to afford such a luxury. On their head, which is shaved, the better class wear blue caps, while the scarlet " fez " is the head-dress of the Sultan and the Court. When walking, their inseparable companion is a large stick, with a huge knob at the top, the possession of which seems to add amazingly to their dignity. The women wear their hair in three or four thick rolls, which are arranged in a peculiar manner. One passes over the head, and the other two over the ears, the three being united on the forehead by means of beeswax and indigo. The usual profusion of ornaments—beads, ivory, and silver—make up the sum of female vanity. Indigo is used to dye their eyebrows, feet, arms, hands and legs, while henna is applied to the palms of the hands and nails of fingers and toes, and antimony to the eyelashes. Yet after all,



A CAPE-COAST KING AND HIS COURT.

the Bornu female is the plainest of her sex and race. She is probably aware of this, and anxious to do the best for herself possible. Who can begrudge her all that art can give ?

The *food* of the Central Africans is as varied as the country they inhabit, and as their character, industry, and skill is varied. The Banyais, one of the Zambesi tribes, use great quantities of mushrooms, found on the Ant Hills, as well as various kinds of roots and tubers, which they are very skilful in discovering the *locale* of by the sound which the ground gives out when struck. The same tribe hunt the hippopotamus by setting traps on its track which cause a heavily-weighted harpoon to descend on the luckless pachyderm while displacing the cord which suspends the weapon. They also hunt the elephant in the following manner:—Two hunters sally forth when an elephant is sighted, both step very cautiously to the place where it is feeding, and while one goes round in front to detract its attention, the other silently approaches from behind, and with one swinging blow of the huge axe which he carries, hamstrings the elephant by severing the hock tendons. The animal is thus rendered helpless, and can never move far from the spot. It will then be either finished at leisure, or the hunters leave it until they can find another, to repeat the same rather murderous method of attack on it. On the return journey both will be disposed of. All the Central African tribes use animal food, with the exceptions mentioned, but vegetables constitute the bulk of their daily aliment. These vegetables are either artificially cultivated or wild—mostly frequently cultivated, for there are few of the Central African tribes but have some idea of the art of tilling the soil. It would be a waste of space to enumerate all their articles of food, which are incidentally referred to in other sections. One is, however, so peculiar that we may note it. The Shir tribe live greatly upon the seed of the white lotus (*Nymphæa lotus*), while the Watujow use the flowers and roots of the lilac-purple one (*Nymphœa stellata*) also as an article of diet. It is curious that the seeds of water-lillies, owing to the large amount of nutrient matter contained in them, are extensively used by different savage tribes. The harvesting of the "Wōkăs" (*Nuphar advena*) we described as an important season for the Klamath Indians, near the Klamath Lake, in Oregon (vol. i., p. 159), while the natives of the region in which the gigantic *Victoria Regina* is found also use the seeds for food. Butter is not eaten by many tribes, its only use being to anoint their skins and hair, while others (Wangoras) will not eat red pepper with the curdled milk which forms so much of their food (and is especially employed to fatten their wives up to the point of obesity pleasing to African eyes), under the idea that it will prevent them having children. In a former volume (vol. i., p. 290) we have alluded to the clay-eaters. Among the Uganda people, whom we have so often spoken of, the queen or head of the Wichwézi women in the palace had an interview Speke was present at, between her and the queen-dowager of the Weeze, "had a platter of clay-stone brought, which she ate with great relish, making a noise of satisfaction like a happy guinea-pig. She threw me a bit, which, to the surprise of everybody, I caught, and threw into my mouth, thinking it was some confection; but the harsh taste soon made me spit it out again, to the amusement of the company." It has been sometimes—in the face of the numerous facts recently brought to light—denied that cannibalism exists in Africa. When we talk a little about the Fans we shall see what M. du Chaillu has to say on this point. In the meantime we are a good way from the west coast; and even here, in the centre of Africa, the revolting practice peeps out in a form which cannot be disguised. The Wabembé, on the authority of slaves who have lived amongst them, are said to be such determined cannibals that when they cannot get human flesh otherwise, they give a goat to their neighbours for a sick or dying child—according to Speke's informant—"regarding such flesh as the best of all." They and several other cognate tribes practice circumcision. The Niam-Niams (or Neam-Nam, as it is sometimes pronounced, the former being Dr. Schweinfurth's spelling, though several distinct tribes have been confounded under that name) *, an illustration of which tribe will be found on p. 28, always devour the bodies of their dead enemies, and it is even said that when any one of their own people is old and feeble, or is so near dying that, to use the sailor's simile in Charles Dickens' famous story, "he needn't be so (blank) partik'ler about a few minutes," he is killed and eaten. Runaway slaves, when recaptured, always meet this fate, though as a rule the slaves are more kindly treated than in any other tribe, and accordingly rarely attempt to escape.

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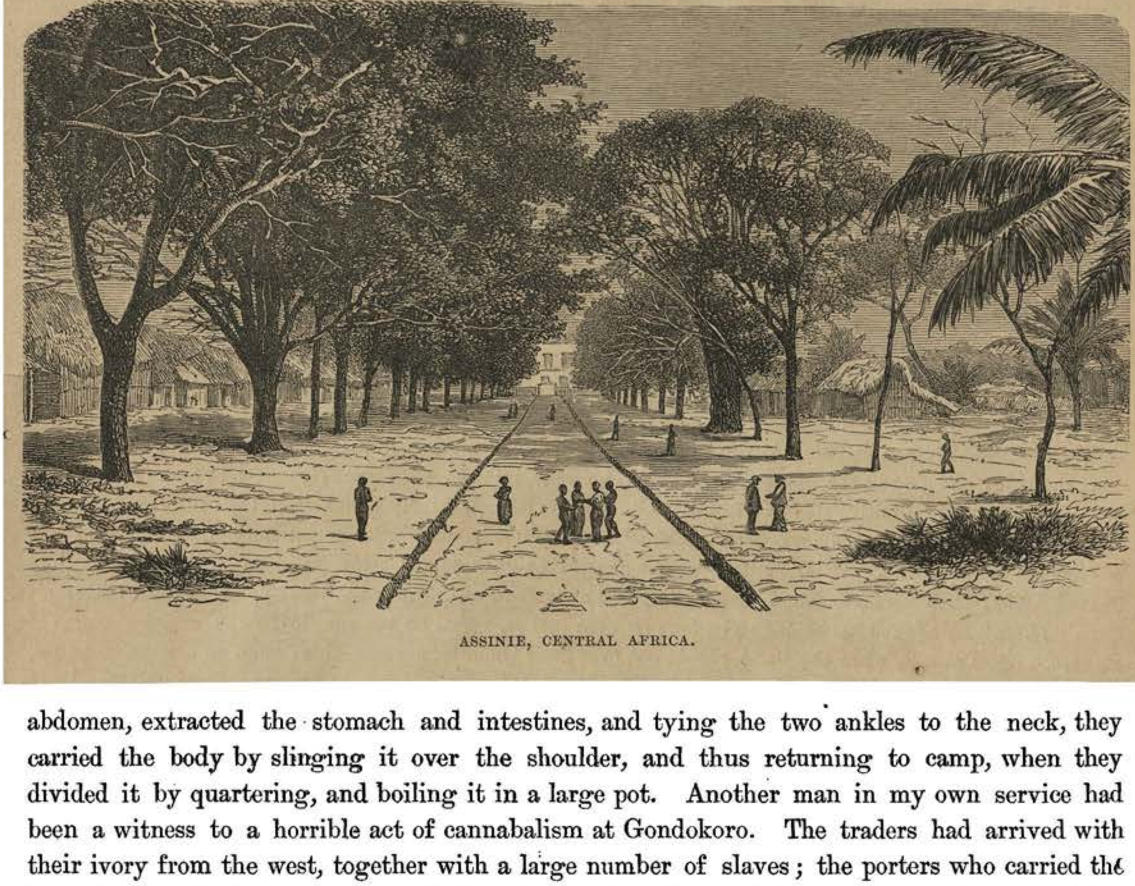
* In a former chapter (vol. ii., p. 223) we spoke of the fabled dwarfs of Africa. Since that description was written the "Heart of Africa," by Dr. Schweinfurth, has been issued, giving an account of another curious race of pygmies, though of a more authentic character than that told by the Sindbad-like Delbo. As no civilised traveller has yet reached their country, perhaps we might as well insert a brief description of them here, especially since it was when among the Niam-Niams that he first became acquainted with them.

The traveller's mind had been excited on the subject of "pygmies" all along the voyage of the Upper Nile. The Nubian boatmen declared they were aware of the existence, far south of the Niam-Niams, of a race of dwarfs three feet in height, who wore beards so long that they reached to their knees. Then he recalled the mention made of "pygmies" by Homer, in his "Iliad"—

> "To warmer seas the cranes embodied fly,
> With noise and order, through the midway sky;
> To pygmy nations wounds and death they bring,
> And all the war descends upon the wing."

Herodotus speaks of them, and more distinctly than Aristotle:—"The cranes fly to the lakes above Egypt, from which flows the Nile; there dwell the pygmies, and this is no fable, but the pure truth; there, just as we are told, do men and horses of diminutive size dwell in caves." Dwarfs had repeatedly been seen in the capacity of buffoons or fools at the various Niam-Niam courts. Speke had become acquainted with one at the court of Kamrasi, but no one believed that whole series of tribes, whose general height was far below an average, did really exist in Central Africa. Schweinfurth found such a court fool or buffoon attached to the residence of Munza, the Niam-Niam "King." He found his height to be four feet ten inches, which he assumed to be the average height of his race. After awhile, when the little people got over their timidity, several others came to see the traveller, and let themselves be measured and examined. The Monbutto army appears to include a corps of these little warriors. One day an expedition returned to King Munza's residence, and besides the regular soldiers a corps of armed pygmies helped to bear in the trophies. "Toward sunset," says Dr. Schweinfurth, "I was passing along the extensive village, on my return to my quarters, when just as I reached the wide open space in front of the royal palace found myself surrounded by what I conjectured must be a crowd of impudent boys, who received me with a sort of bravado fight. They pointed their arrows towards me, and behaved generally in a manner at which I could not help feeling somewhat irritated, as it betokened unwarrantable liberty and intentional disrespect. My apprehension was soon corrected by the Niam-Niam people about me. 'They are Tikketikke (Akka),' said they; 'you imagine they are boys, but in truth they are men; nay, men that can fight.'" Next morning, when the Doctor sought up the dwarfs, they had gone, and he saw them no more. He obtained possession of one Akka and brought him as far as Khartoum, where he died from too good living. The portrait of this pigmy shows a head whose facial angle is little better than that of a chimpanzee. Unfortunately for ethnological science, Dr. Schweinfurth was unable to penetrate further southwards. Had he gone on, perhaps he might have discovered other and still more interesting specimens of humanity—perhaps those wonderful people "who use their feet for umbrellas," or those objectionable people who "eat their fathers and curse the sun." Maybe he could have found the "missing link" that is wanting to establish our relationship with the ape, although the Akkas are near enough for our comfort. Dr. Schweinfurth says that the Akkas and the other

A Negro race called the Babookr, living not far from the Niam-Niams, is even more notoriously cannabalistic than that people. Baker was told of the Makkarika, a cannibal tribe, who dwelt about two hundred miles west of Gondokoro, the highest point to which the trading parties navigate the White Nile. Beyond a taste for dogs and men as articles of food, the Makkarikas were described as "remarkably good people." When the slave traders made a "razzia," or plundering attack on a village, they accompanied them for the sake of eating the slain. "The traders complained that they were bad associates, as they insisted upon killing and eating the children, which the party wished to secure as slaves; their custom was to catch a child by its ankles, and to dash its head against the ground; thus, killed, they opened the abdomen, extracted the stomach and intestines, and tying the two ankles to the neck, they carried the body by slinging it over the shoulder, and thus returning to camp, when they divided it by quartering, and boiling it in a large pot. Another man in my own service had been a witness to a horrible act of cannabalism at Gondokoro. The traders had arrived with their ivory from the west, together with a large number of slaves; the porters who carried the ivory being Makkarikas. One of the slave girls attempted to escape, and her proprietor immediately fired at her with his musket, and she fell wounded; the ball had struck her in the side. The girl was remarkably stout, and from the wound a large lump of yellow fat exuded.



ASSINIE, CENTRAL AFRICA.

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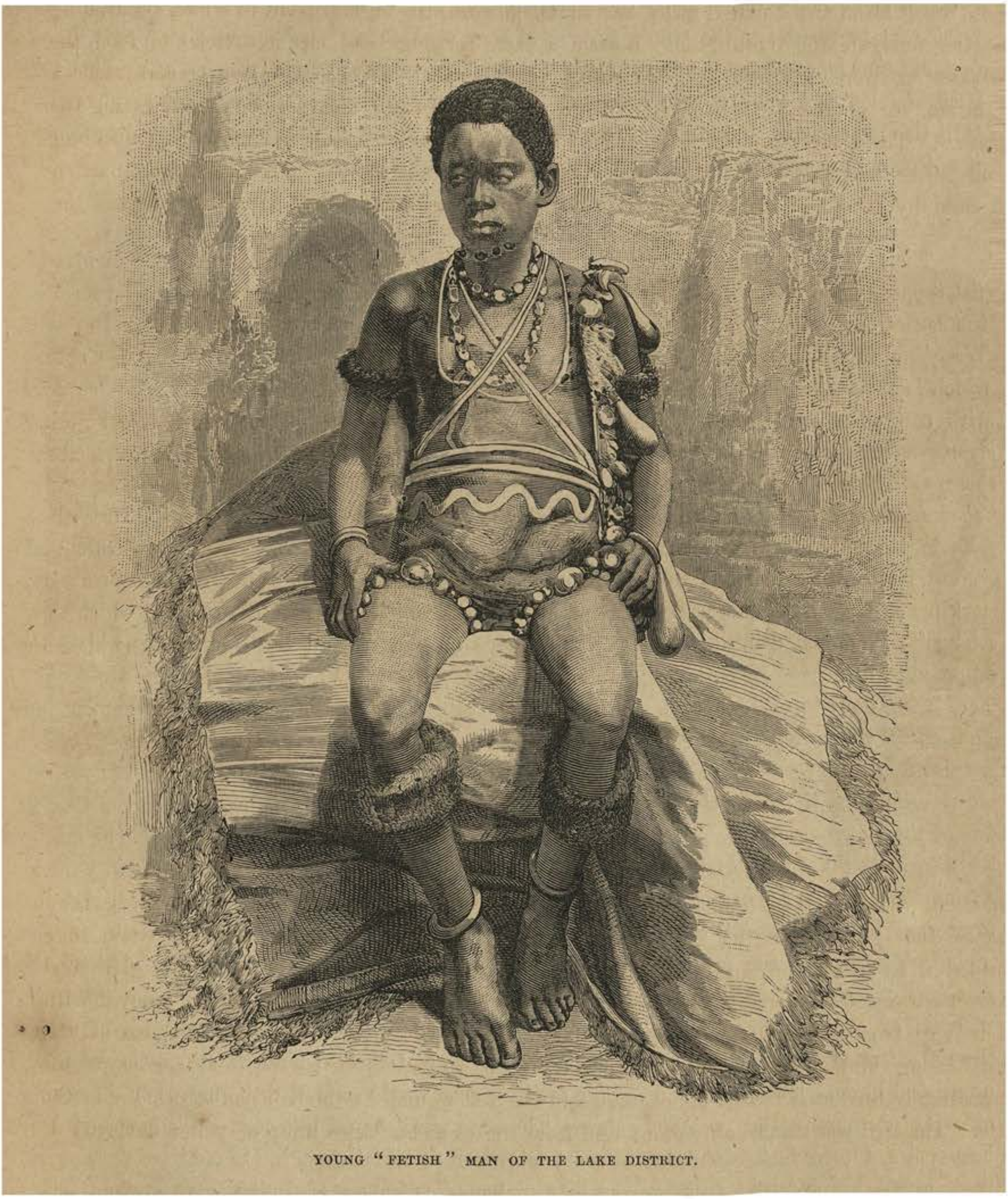
pygmy tribes, like the Bushmen of South Africa, are the scattered remains of an aboriginal population now becoming extinct. He sees many points of resemblance between the Akkas and the Bushmen of South Africa and other dwarf tribes, as bearing out the assumption. Two of these pigmies have since then (May 1874), arrived in Naples with Professors Panceri and Gasco. The eldest is a boy about fifteen, and three-and-a-half feet in height. He seems not full grown, and may belong to a race from four-and-a-half to five feet in height.

No sooner had she fallen, than the Makkarikas rushed upon her in a crowd, and seizing the fat, they tore it from the wound in handfuls, the girl being still alive, while the crowd were quarrelling for the disgusting prize, and then killed her with a lance, and at once divided her by cutting off her head, and splitting the body with their lances, used as knives, cutting it longitudinally into as many pieces as were required. Many slave women and their



YOUNG "FETISH" MAN OF THE LAKE DISTRICT.

children who witnessed this scene, rushed panic-stricken from the spot and took refuge in trees. The Makkarikas seeing them in flight were excited to give chase, and pulling the children from their refuge among the branches, they killed several, and in a short time, a great feast was prepared for the whole party. My man, Mahommed, who was an eye witness, declared that he could not eat his dinner for three days, so great was his disgust at this horrible feast."* Perhaps some of the foregoing is not exactly evidence of a very sound character. Still there is enough—too much—to enable us to conclude that cannabalism of a very disgusting, if not of a very widespread character is found in Central Africa.

HOUSES.

Their dwellings vary much. Some, like those of the Weeze, are square, mud built (p. 9), and flat topped, while others are built of grass with a palisade of poles. A very common form is the conical, and this prevails in one variety or another over a great extent of Africa. In every Wanyamuezi village worthy of the name, there is a sort of common meeting-house or "club," which is of a large size and different construction than the ordinary houses. Benches covered with cow skins are arranged along the side of it for visitors to sit on. Into this building strangers are first ushered until a permanent or temporary place of residence is provided for them, and here the village gossips assemble every evening to join in what Colonel Grant calls "that interminable talk which seems one of the chief joys of a native African. Here they performed kindly offices to each other, such as pulling out the hairs of the eyelashes and eyebrows with their curious little tweezers, chipping the teeth into the correct form, and marking on the cheeks and temples the peculiar marks which designate the class to which they belong." Smoking, drinking, and gambling goes on; indeed, all the occupations which are supposed to be carried on within the walls of a club—reading the newspapers being excepted—there being none to read, though gossip supplies their place—and abusing the government, an amusement which renders life of too precarious a tenure to be safely indulged in. Dances are also carried on—not in it, but in the open space in front of it; and, take them as a whole, notwithstanding the despotic government they live under (though we must remember that it was of their own accord that they gave their king such absolute power in order that "he might be the greatest king of Africa"), are a lively race, who take the world, as it exists in Central Africa, very easy. At night, Grant describes all quiet. The revellers have ceased, and the roysterous have drunk all their beer and gone to sleep—the sleep of the well drunk. "The traveller's horn, and the reply to it from a neighbouring village, are incidental alarms; the chirping of crickets, and the cry from a sick child, however, occasionally broke upon the stillness of one's night. Waking early, the first sounds we heard were the crowing of cocks, the impatient lowing of cows, and bleating of calves, and the chirping of sparrows, and other unmusical birds. The pestle and mortar shelling corn would soon after be heard, or the cooing of wild pigeons in the grove of palms. The huts were shaped like corn-stacks, supported by bare poles, fifteen feet high, and fifteen to eighteen feet in diameter. Sometimes their grass-roofs would be protected from sparks by 'michans,' or frames of Indian corn stalks. There were no carpets, and all was as dark as the hold of a ship. A few earthen jars, made like the

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* "Albert N'Yanza" (new edition), p. 188.

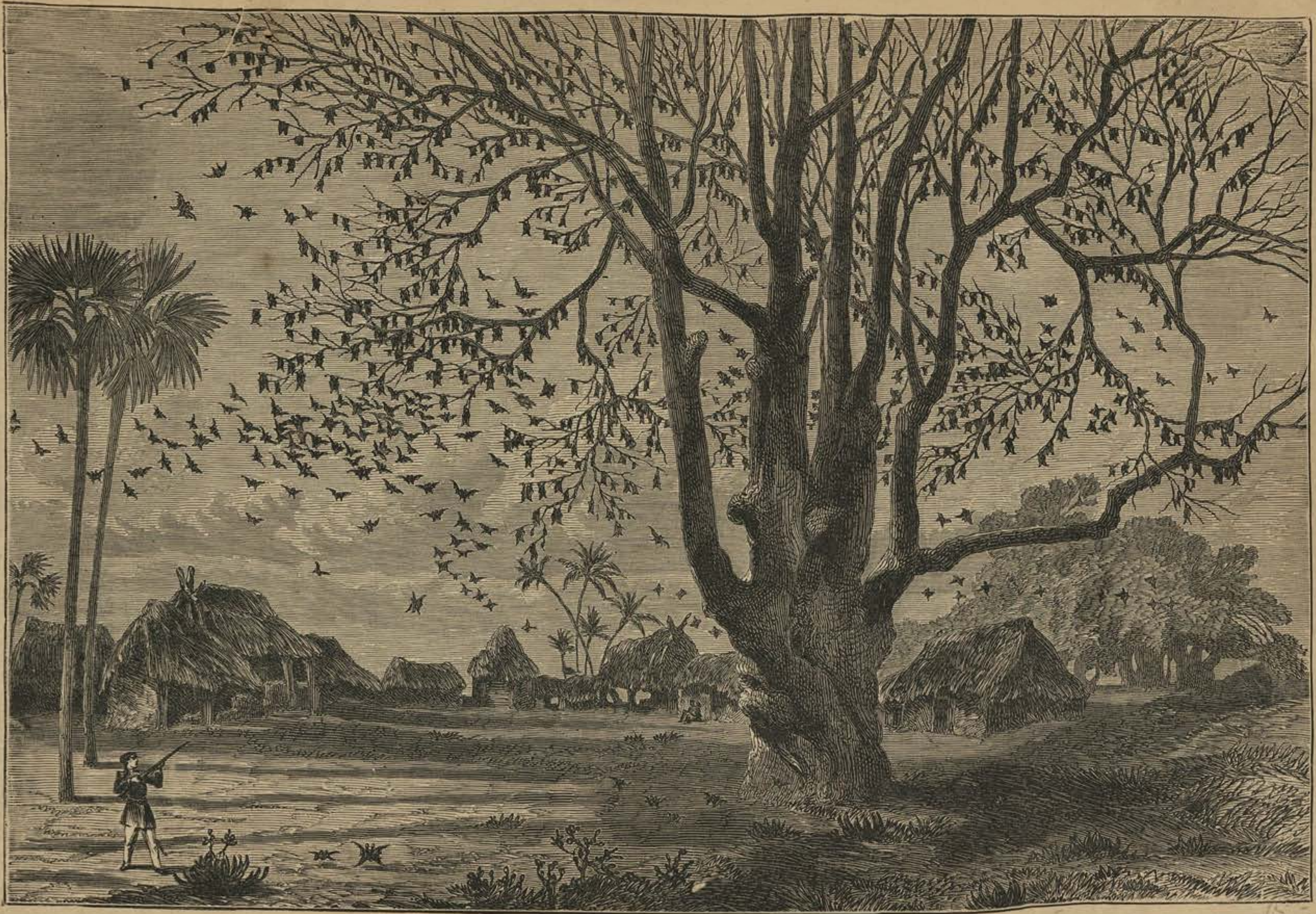
Indian 'gurrah' for boiling vegetables or stirabout, tattered skins, an old bow and arrow, some cups of grass, some gourds, perhaps a stool, constitute the whole of the furniture. Grain was housed in hard boxes of bark, and goats or calves had free access over the house."

The palace of the king of Uganda is a large establishment, being, in fact, a considerable village of villas, enclosed by a fence, entered by a number of gates at which guards stand day and night, with orders to admit no one except by order of the king. The further to assist the vigilance of these custodians of royalty, a bell is attached to each door, which, by its ringing, apprises the guard that some one is attempting to enter unbid. Everything within this enclosure was regulated with great dignity and tidiness, affording a marked contrast to the palace of his majesty of Unyoro, a neighbouring kingdom. The Wangoro, as the people are called, are a filthy set, lacking hospitality, and almost every savage virtue. Their huts are dirty in the extreme, the floor being covered with rotten straw, which is the common nestling place of men, goats, and fowls. In the king's palace calves are kept within the enclosure, and these animals wander free about the whole place, entering into his sleeping apartment. Captain Speke would fain have had a pair of stilts when he visited the king, who, with that perfect ease which long familiarity had given him, walked about undismayed ankle deep in filth, no doubt wondering what all the fuss was about. The Madi houses are constructed of a conical frame-work of bamboo thatched with grass. Accordingly, whenever it suits them to remove to another locality, all they have to do is to "up stakes" and remove. One or two men drive the cattle, the conical bamboo roof is borne on the shoulders of four or five men, the bamboo stakes and poles are carried by others, while the women and children bring up the rear. We have already spoken of the Borneo cities. Close to Borneo, and continually at war with it, is the kingdom of Berghami, in regard to which we have a little yet to say. In the meantime we may note their dwellings, which are, over a great part of the country, built house within house, like a nest of different-sized band-boxes, the idea being to keep out the plague of flies which are so numerous during the day as to be a pest so insufferable that every means has to be devised to avoid them. Nobody dare venture out for some hours during the day, under the penalty of being so bitten about the eyes and face as to be unrecognisable for long after.

GOVERNMENT.

All the Central African governments are more or less despotic. Among the Manganja the country is divided up into a number of districts, each of which has under its control some villages; but each of these districts, or "Rundos," as they are called, are independent of each other, not even acknowledging a common chief. Each village pays tribute to the Rundo, which in its turn protects and assists them in time of trouble. In fact, the system is much that of the Swiss Cantons, or the American States; "state rights," however, being rather further advanced in the Black-kingly-Republic, than in the European or Transatlantic democratic one. A woman may also be chief of a Rundo, and it is said that they exercise their authority in a most judicious manner. The Banyai, a tribe of the southern bank of the Zambesi, elect their chiefs, but—as was the case in England up to the time of Henry II., when it fell into disuse—always select him out of one family, though they never select the immediate descendants of the late monarch, but always some relative, such as a nephew or brother. It is accounted etiquette for the newly-elected chief to affect an air of modesty, and a seeming desire to decline the proferred honours as too great for a man of his rank, ability, and ambition. In fact, he expected to be "thrice," or a greater number of times, offered the "kingly crown;" but, unlike his Roman prototype, there is no case on record in which the honour was eventually "refused." It is only a bit of mock by-play, suitable to the occasion, quite as well understood in Africa as in England, and never intended to be taken literally. The new chief not only inherits the property, but also the wives and children of his predecessors, though not unfrequently one of the sons of the former chief considers, not unnaturally, that he is not to be kept in subservience to the new monarch, and attempts to set up as a petty chief for himself, an attempt which generally results in his having his village burnt about his ears, as a gentle hint that he had better receive his superior in a proper manner—viz., by clapping of hands, the common method of salutation among most of these African tribes. Among the Banyais it is the custom for well-to-do men to send their sons to be educated, under some man of eminence, in all the duties and accomplishments of Banyai gentlemen, just as in former times in Europe the sons of gentlemen were sent as pages and esquires to be trained in the laws of chivalry under some puissant knight. Among the Wahumas a curious law prevails. If any one becomes a slave—which it is unnecessary to say is always an involuntary act—he or she is put to death, because by so doing they have broken one of the laws of their country. Speke witnessed an instance of this, in which some women were actually put to death by their own husbands. Theft is generally punished in Africa—that is to say, if it is committed on any of their own tribe. The Karagues punish this crime with imprisonment in the stocks, often for months at a time. Let a man strike another with a stick, and he can expiate the offence by paying ten goats; but if a spear, or any other lethal weapon is the instrument used, then he is punished by being deprived of all his property—one half of the forfeited goods going to the sultan, the other to the person who has been assaulted. In case of murder, the whole goods of the murderer are forfeited to the relatives of the slain man. The laws against adultery are curiously at once both lax and severe. If a wife offend, then she pays the penalty by losing an ear; if a slave, or the daughter of the sultan, is the guilty party, then both she and her paramour are executed.

We have spoken already of the despotism of some of these kings; and when studying African government we see an extraordinary series of gradations, from the king being endowed with absolute power over the lives and property of his subjects, to others in which he was controlled on every side by means of wise and prudent laws, tending to the limitation of the royal prerogative. M'tesa (or M'tessa, as Grant writes it), the reader will already have seen, was one of these irresponsible despots. Human life in the eyes of this young man seems to have had no value, and what is still more extraordinary, the people under his rule seem to have peaceably submitted to his cruelty; not that he was a wise or famous monarch, whose rule conferred great blessings on his country, but simply because they had given him absolute power, so that he might be the greatest king in Africa. As a specimen of this young gentleman's rule we may give one little incident. Speke presented him with a carbine; the king loaded it with his own hands, and "giving it full-cock to a page, told him to go out and shoot a man in the outer court; which was no sooner accomplished than the little urchin returned to announce his success with a look of glee such as one would see in the face of a boy who had robbed a bird's nest, caught a trout, or done any other boyish trick. The king said to

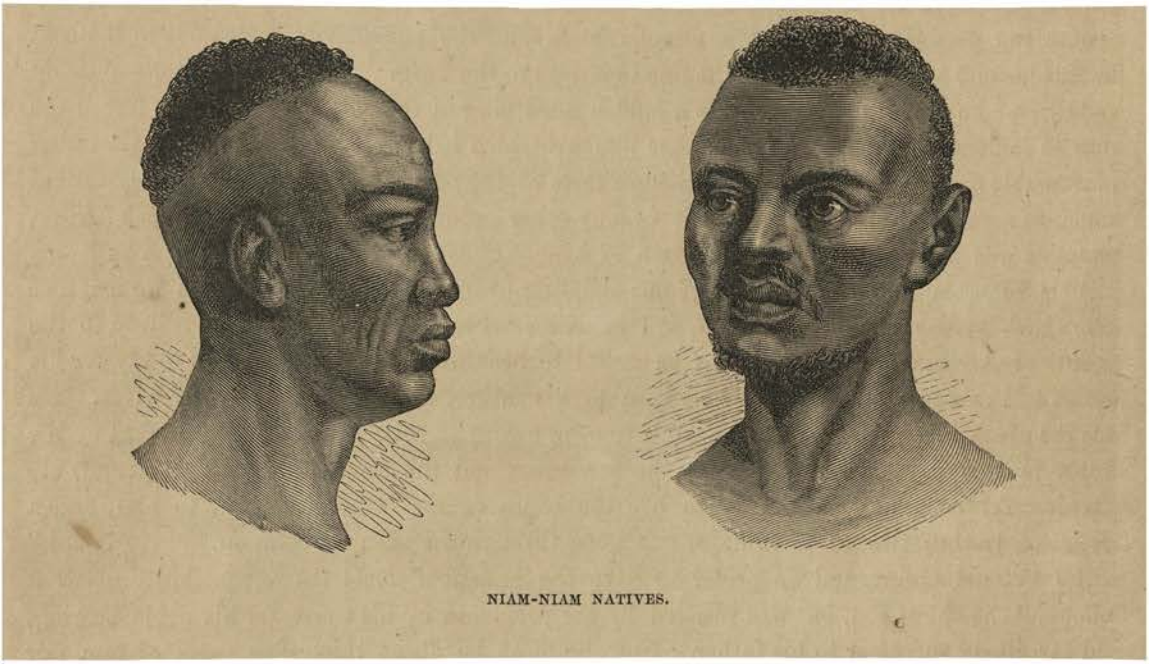


TREE IN THE DAHOMEY COUNTRY LADEN WITH BATS.

him, 'And did you do it well?' 'Oh yes, capitally.' He spoke the truth, no doubt, for he dared not have trifled with the king; but the affair created hardly any interest. I never heard, and there appeared no curiosity to know, what individual human being the urchin had deprived of life." The reader must remember, that in a country where family ties are so loose —independently of the absence of those refined feelings which intwine the affections—the loss of life cannot be looked upon in the same light as amongst civilised people. The country is teeming with population, and the loss of a man, more or less, makes very little difference to the tribe. To his own family the loss is scarcely more. When his affections—if affection exists at all—are divided among a harem of wives, each of whom has been bought, has been cruelly treated a score of times, and is looked upon and looks upon herself just as so much human merchandise, there can be but little lament over the loss of the head of the house. The wives will be sold, or appropriated by the heir: the children are bound to be disposed of in any case. The sons never lavish much affection on their sire, and as for the daughters, all the difference his death is to them is that they exchange one seller for another. The cows, which would have been the equivalent for them, would have gone to somebody; who it is is a very immaterial matter to these prosaic, ebony beauties. The tie of wife or sister seems to act as no obstacle whatever to these African despots depriving their victims of life. Speke was pestered with proposals of marriage by ladies who did not approve of this summary method of execution. One day a young lady proposed to marry him, not approving of her intended, who was a "brutal man," who had killed one of his women because he did not like her, and had clipped the ears of another who had tried to run away. (We have all heard of something not unlike this much nearer home, but of course Africa is a barbarous country lying in heathen darkness.) At intervals the king would hold levees, and distribute appointments, plantations, and women, to his officers, in accordance with their merits. At one of these levees a man happened to grumble at only receiving one woman when he considered that his merits deserved two or more. His Majesty was wroth, called him an ingrate, and ordered him to immediate execution—a sentence carried into effect by the unhappy wretch being cut to pieces with slips of sharp-edged grass, after the neck had been first dislocated by a blow delivered behind the head with a short, heavy-headed stick. An old man, with his two ears shorn off "for having been too handsome in his youth," was accused of concealing a fugitive young woman in his house. The charge was not a very likely one in the circumstances, but no defence was listened to. Both were instantly ordered to execution. To make the example more impressive, and prevent as far as possible such impropriety in the future, it was ordered that their lives were not to be taken at once, but, in order to preserve life as long as possible, they were to be dismembered bit by bit, to feed the vultures day by day until life was extinct. The criminals begged to be heard, but they were dragged off, their cries drowned in the noise of drums and other musical instruments, always at hand for this purpose. No sooner had they departed than the king, in total unconcern, turned to Speke and said, "Now then for shooting. Bana, let us look at your gun," and ordered in cows to shoot at; meanwhile, in boyish impatience, firing one barrel into the thatch of his palace, and nearly setting it on fire, and the other in the face of the prostrate mob of people. That this wretched boy-king did not feel any repugnance in ordering this execution, may be inferred from the fact that on one occasion, when on a shooting excursion, having to pass a place where a woman was tied by the hands to be punished for some offence, his Majesty "combined business with pleasure" (which was the business and which the pleasure?) by taking upon himself the executioner's office by firing at her, and killing her outright; perhaps after all a merciful act to her. Yet there seems to have been people in Uganda whom long familiarity had not deadened to all sense of the revolting character of these exhibitions, or whose abhorrence of cruelty was not neutralised by reverence "which hedges around a king with awe."

One of the strangest tales Speke ever heard in Uganda was one the king himself related—how a boy of sixteen or seventeen on finding the king alone, threatened to kill him, because he took the lives of men unjustly. The king happened to have in his hand a revolver which Speke had presented to him, and though it was unloaded, the mere effect of his presenting it at the would-be regicide was such that he turned and fled. Under ordinary circumstances, no torturing death, however brutal in its nature, would have been considered sufficient to atone for this offence against the person of royalty, but strange to say, all the punishment meted out to the bold (or half insane) youth, was to pay the fine of a goat to the king. Why he was let off so easily could never be found out; there was a hidden something at the bottom of it which forced the king to leniency. Probably it was a case like this which led Captain Grant to entertain rather a favourable opinion of King M'tesa, though facts of the nature we have so abundantly related would, one would think, scarcely admit of any other opinion than that this youthful African potentate was so concentrated a specimen of kingly cruelty and heartless despotism as it was possible to cram into the compass of one stripling of five-and-twenty. Still, as we may not have much to say about him again, and as King M'tesa figures rather extensively in the records of African ethnology, it may be useful to hear what Colonel Grant has to say for his friend. M'tesa was one of forty sons born to his father, King Soona, by many wives. He was the ninth king, whose names are all known, owing to their tombs being protected by the crown to this day. In these tombs the jaw-bones and the bones of the thigh (femur) are placed. At each new moon M'tesa had the bones of his father conveyed to him, and a ceremony, lasting two or three days, was gone through on such an occasion. "He is not," writes Colonel Grant, and we prefer to give the gallant Colonel the responsibility of what follows, "the eldest son, but was selected by the people, or by his court, for his noble bearing, and as a likely successor to his father. Now, he must be about thirty-five years of age, fair for an African, not thick-lipped, but with wooly hair, handsome figure, five feet eight inches in height, and manly in all his pursuits, being fond of boating, shooting, and other sports. He has no knowledge of reading or writing, or of time, but counts by sticks, measures time by seasons, or moons, or by saying that so-and-so would take place when a cow's calf would have calved, or when there would be a grandson or great grandson. He has a remarkably quick perception, and is naturally finely dispositioned, often showing kindness and mercy to those he rules over, but the existing law of his country obliges him to assume the fierceness of the lion when he has to execute or punish crimimals, events of frequent occurrence, and often for very trivial offences. We daily observed three or four men and women being led off to be killed. The mode of execution is by a blow at the back of the head; no burial takes place, the victims are cut up for vultures, which sit languidly upon the trees. The public of Uganda enjoy the observance of great state at their court, and assemble in hundreds round the royal residence daily. They allow the king as many wives and houses as he chooses. We saw two or three hundred of his wives. Wishing to make him the greatest king in Africa, they gave him authority to punish without trial, and plunder slaves, cattle, crops, boats, &c., for him, wherever they can find them."* In truth, an admirable young man! If the king is allowed the permission to plunder, he seems also to allow it to others. Speke's men had hard work to get food. When any complaint was made, they were told just to help themselves—stop and rob the men and women of loads of plantains, and generally conduct themselves as seemed best in their eyes, so long as they did not bother His Majesty or interfere with his pleasures.

We have spoken of that good old English fashion of punishing minor offences by confining the culprit's feet in the stocks. In the court-yard of a high official in Uganda it is not an uncommon sight to see men, women, and children sitting like so many Hudibrases and Ralphos, and, with their feet in the instrument, waiting his pleasure to see what he would take for their release. The office of executioner in Uganda is a very honourable office, and the holders of it are accounted pleasant gentlemen to know and cultivate. Nor can one well see why the pronouncer and executioner of the sentence should be looked upon so differently in civilised society, and especially by honest folks who can have no prejudice against him on the ground of a fear of by-and-by coming under his hands. Among the Wanyoro the mode of pronouncing sentence is peculiar. If the king, or his substitute, touch any one with his club, then the person so touched is *speared* to death; but if a spear is the implement with which he is touched, then he is fallen upon and beat to death with a *club*, the instrument used in executing the criminal being always the opposite of that with which he is touched.


NIAM-NIAM NATIVES.

The government of the Negro kingdom of Borneo is remarkable. Nominally, at least, it is governed by a Sultan; and every court ceremony is attended with the greatest pomp and dignity. It is etiquette there to put on all the clothes it is possible to wear, in order to show your wealth and rank. Especially is this necessary in countries where men of rank are expected to have large heads and stomachs, and, as they are rather spare than otherwise, the deficiency in corpulency is made up by artifical aids to obesity, in appearance at least. Major Denham* describes a ludicrous court ceremony. In the morning the Sultan seated himself in a kind of cage, past which each person "presented at court" rode, trussed in the superfluity of garments referred to; after which he dismounted and seated himself with *his back* to the Sultan.

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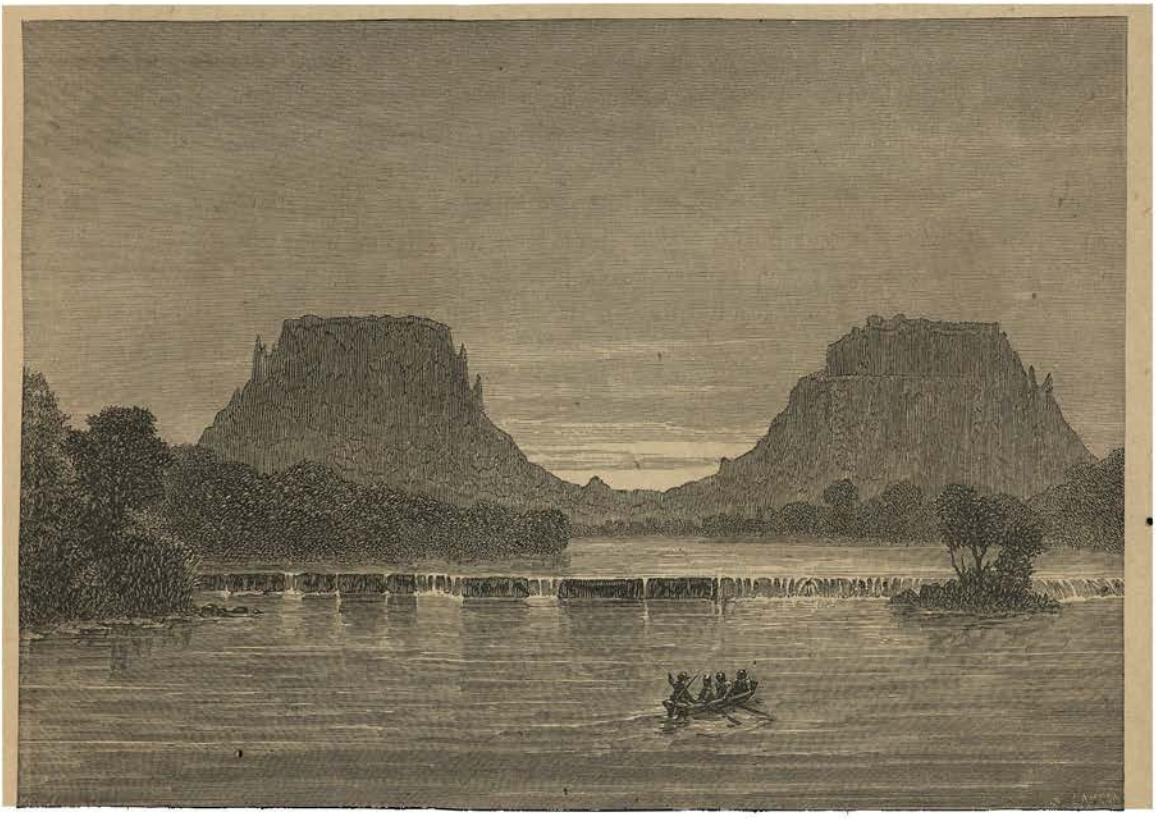
* Journal of the Royal Geographical Society, vol. xlii. (1872), p. 273.



RIVER VIEW IN CENTRAL AFRICA.

The Sultan of Borneo is, however, only the nominal head of the state; the real ruler is the Sheik, who commands the army. In war the Sultan accompanies the army, and though supposed to command it, he in reality gives no orders, nor is even armed, fighting being looked upon as an employment foreign to the dignity of such a potentate, who, to use the American expression, "keeps men to do his fighting" for him. The dignity of one, at least, of these Sultans was his death. He was hotly pursued to the gates of his city by his enemies, but his tired horse refused to stir when it came near the entrance. It was beneath the dignity of such an official to walk. Accordingly he calmly accepted what seemed to him—the inevitable.

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* "Travels in Africa," p. 234.

Wrapping his face in his shawl, he sat down under a tree and quietly met his death, with twelve of his followers, who refused to leave him to save their own lives. The Sheik is also surrounded by a court, after another sort; but everything connected with the heads of the state is in Borneo a matter for the most courtly state and ceremony, for a description of which, however, we must refer the reader to Major Denham's well-known work.

A few particulars about the extraordinary manner in which the king of Uganda guards against a disputed succession may conclude these notes on Central African government. The king's brothers are always kept in irons, and though thus seemingly degraded, they would visit Speke and Grant with the chains on their legs and arms, apparently as happy and merry as young men could be. "They laughed, chatted, and amused themselves, and made many inquiries of us in the presence of the king, their brother, without ceremony or appearance of restraint. This extraordinary custom seems traditional, and prevents them getting an ascendency over the sovereign elect; but it does not last long, for when M'tesa finishes his period of probation as Prince Regent, and has been crowned sovereign, all these young fellows are placed upon a pile and burnt. They showed us the piles of wood upon which they were to be put when the day came, and spoke of it without any indication of fear or of regret. They seemed determined to enjoy life while it lasted, joining their brother in all festivities and all excursions for sport and amusement. Separate houses had been allotted to them and their families, for they were permitted to marry; but they were not often seen within the grounds of the palace." *

In Unyoro, the king's sisters are compelled to live and die unmarried. Their only occupation is, according to Speke, the consumption daily of the milk of ten to twenty cows, the result of which is that in time they get so enormously fat as to be unable to walk. Should they wish to go on a visit, or even go outside of their hut for any purpose, it requires eight men and a litter to remove these obese damsels. The brothers are also, in order to prevent civil wars, and for the same reason that the Uganda princes are, after a certain season, destroyed, confined to the palace, and never allowed to go out of reach of the king's strong arm—all of which precautions it cannot be denied are, in the state of African society, wise, prudent, and necessary for the peace of the state, though at the same time they might be exercised with something less of the cruelty and barbarism which seems innate to all things African.

Implements, Employments, &c.

To enumerate far less to describe, all the implements which the numerous Central African tribes—having abundance of wood at their disposal, and in many cases with a knowledge of the art of extracting metals from ores—have in their ingenuity devised, would tax our space to an extent which might be more profitably disposed of. Their arms are chiefly the spear, but the bow is also used. Some of the tribes use poisoned arrows. The Bari arrows are poisoned with some substance which speedily causes death when it is received into a wound. The flesh in the vicinity of the wound slowly mortifies, until the limb goes and death in time follows. What is the substance used is not known: probably it is of vegetable origin.

The Berghami people—that semi-civilised Negroid Mohammedan kingdom which we have

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* Grant, "Journal of the Royal Geographical Society," vol. xlii. (1872), p. 273.

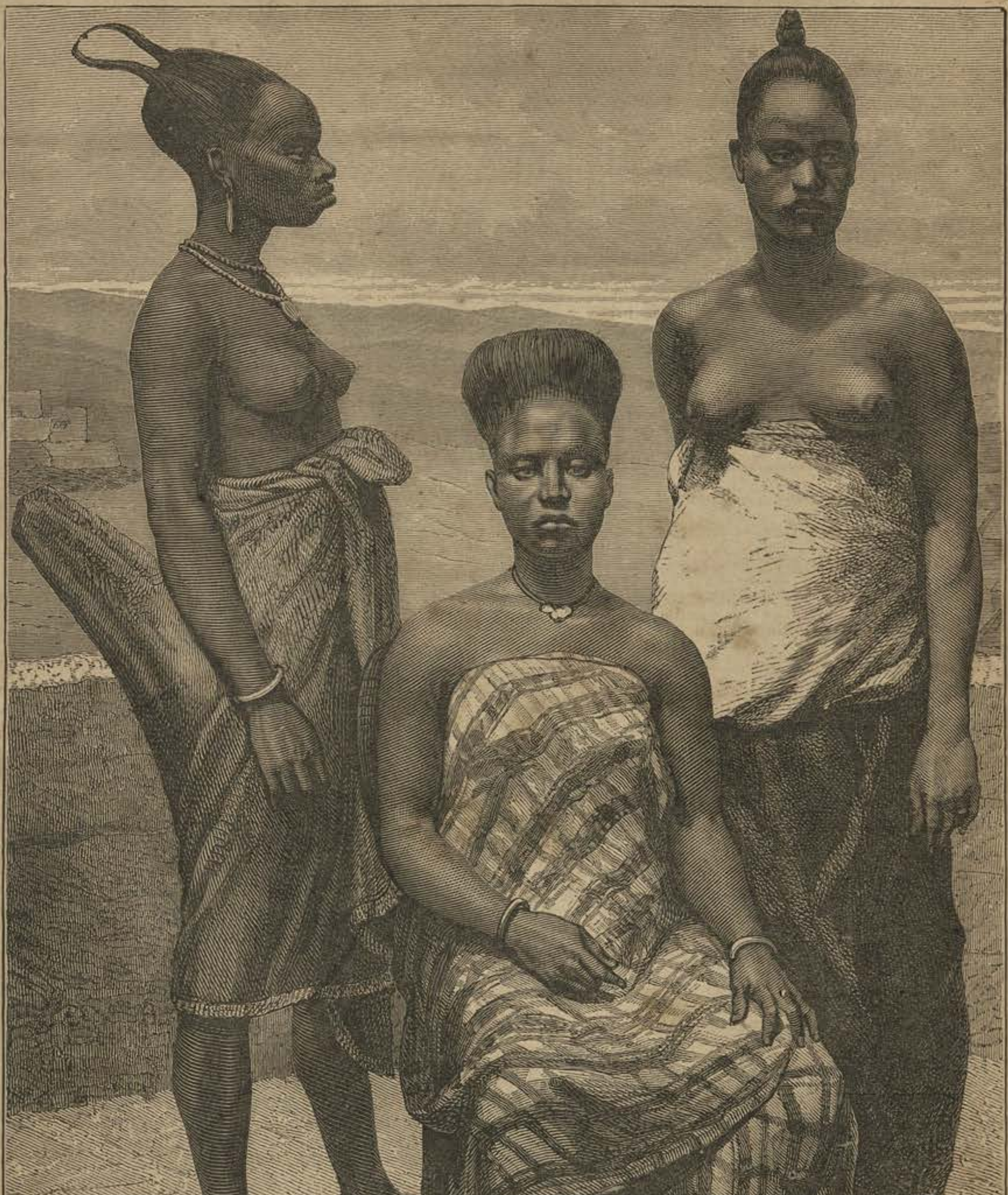
already several times spoken of—use horses in their warfare, which cannot live, owing to the bite of the *tetse* fly, in most parts of Africa. These troopers are covered with a defensive armour made of quilted cloth or cotton—like that worn by the Chinese, or somewhat resembling the buff coat so much in vogue in England during the period of the Civil War. This armour is light but cumbersome, and is rarely used except in actual combat, when it is useful as a protection against arrows, though scarcely able to withstand the throw of the curious two-pronged spear in use by these people. The horse is also protected by a similar armour. All of their cooking and household utensils are of a very humble and decidedly primitive character, and, though interesting from an ethnological point of view, artistically are less worthy of notice than those of almost any people we have hitherto touched upon. They are fond of music, and instruments for discoursing melody are numerous, and in many cases ingenious. Most of the great dignitaries keep a private band, whose only instrument, in the greater number of cases, seems to be a conical-shaped drum, on the abruptly cut-off end or base of which the drummer beats. This gong is beaten on many and varied occasions—in joy as well as in sorrow—in war and in peace. If a person is starting off on a journey the drums are beaten; and, strangest idea of all, these tribes, when making a night attack, always first set up a hideous rat-at-ating of drums, though the only effect of this manœuvre seems to be to give the enemy warning. Perhaps they have an idea that the hideous noise strikes terror in the heart of the attacked. Probably it does; it ought to, at all events.

The Central Africans, like all barbarous or savage people, are a lazy race, only just working enough to supply themselves with what their stage of civilisation has made necessary to them. It is not improbable that the industry of any nation is in an exact ratio to its many wants. And the African having few wants, does not distress himself by toiling in the heat and sun of an African summer. What work they have to do they leave to their slaves; if they have none, then the women and children perform these offices, but in all cases, in a very prefunctory manner. They manufacture various fabrics. One of the most interesting of these is the fig-tree bark-cloth, called "mbŭgŭ," which is extensively worn as an article of clothing by all the people about the equator. The shirt, or whatever other garment it is manufactured into, is made of several pieces of bark sewn together, which is stripped from the tree, "after cutting once round the bark above and below, and then once more down the tree from the upper to the lower circular cutting." These pieces of bark are then immersed in water, and firmly beaten with a small-headed mallet, which ribs them like corduroy. It is probably made from the bark of various species of trees. Cotton is grown and manufactured; baskets of a very excellent quality are made. They do not cultivate the open places only, but clear and cultivate wooded places. This labour is performed both by men, women, and children, though, as a rule, it is the latter who perform this labour. The Bademas—a rapidly expiring tribe—in addition to cultivating Indian corn or maize, tobacco and cotton, are keen hunters, using a net made of the fig-tree bark in which to entrap the zebras, antelopes, and other animals, which they pursue into glens and ravines across the mouth of which it is stretched. In order to conceal the supplies of corn from their rapacious enemies, they store it in quiet places in the hills, in sacks made of a bitter kind of bark which mice and rats will not devour.

Cattle-breeding is among all the Central African tribes a favourite occupation. No wealth is valued to the extent which cattle are. They are generally kept for the sake of their flesh, for many of them do not use the milk, and the butter only as an ointment to rub their skins with, while others do not even know that the milk can be used as an article of food. Naturally, many almost wild, the African cattle are poor creatures, all sinew and bone, covered with a little stringy muscle. But the Bolondo, and one or two other tribes more advanced in the social scale, made efforts to improve the breed of their cattle by obtaining better varieties and "strains" of good blood.

The Watusi are especially a race of herdsmen, and excel in the management of stock—being paid at the rate of half the cow's milk—an amount scarcely exceeding half a pint, for the African cows, it ought to be noted, yield but little milk. Cattle form with the White Nile slave traders one of the chief articles of barter for their human wares. A few sheep and goats are kept by some tribes, but they do not seem—especially the first—to be greatly in favour with the Central African graziers. Agriculture is not much followed, but everybody cultivates a little garden or patch of ground for growing maize or other vegetables for his own consumption. Some, like the Weeze, are traders, and like all traders, are fond of moving about from place to place. In no other tribe could Speke get men willing to leave their country and act as porters to his expedition. Public works can scarcely to be said to exist, public spirit being a feeling almost as little known in Central Africa as in Central America. Uganda has, however, excellent roads, a feature in which it stands alone among its sister kingdoms. Bridges are built across the rivers and swamps, but their structures are generally very ephemeral structures.

The Unyoros—a comparatively respectable set of folks as respectability goes in Africa—are, in addition to being decently clothed, good blacksmiths; they use iron hammers instead of the stone ones in common use amongst other tribes, and draw fine wire from thick copper and brass wire they receive from Zanzibar. They also make rude pottery. In reference to this Sir Samuel Baker writes, "Nearly all savages have some idea of earthenware; but the scale of advancement of a country between savagedom and civilisation may generally be determined by the example of its pottery. The Chinese, who were as civilised as they are at the present day, at a period when the English were barbarians, were ever celebrated for their manufacture of porcelain, and the difference between savage and civilised countries is always thus exemplified; the savage makes earthenware, but the civilised make porcelain—thus, the gradation from the rudest earthenware will mark the improvement in the scale of civilisation. The prime utensil of the African savage is the gourd; the shell of which is the bowl presented to him by nature as the first idea from which he is to model. Nature, adapting herself to the requirements of animals and man, appears in these savage countries to yield abundantly much that savage man can want. Gourds with exceedingly strong shells grow wild. These, divided in halves, form useful bowls, and great and quaint varieties make natural bottles of all sizes, from the tiny phial to the demijohn containing four gallons. The most savage tribes content themselves with the productions of nature, confining their manufacture to a coarse and half-baked jar for carrying water; but the semi-savage, like those of Unyoro, affords an example of the first step towards manufacturing art, by the fact of *copying from nature;* the utter savage makes use of nature—the gourd is his utensil; and the more advanced natives of Unyoro adopt it as the model for their pottery. They make a fine quality of jet-black earthenware, producing



WOMEN OF ELMINA (ASHANTI).

excellent tobacco-pipes, most finely worked in imitation of the small egg-shaped gourd; of the same earthenware they make extremely pretty bowls, and also bottles copied from the varieties of the bottle gourds. Thus, in this humble art, we see the first effort of the human mind in manufactures in taking nature for a model; precisely as the beautiful Corinthian capital originated in a design from a basket of flowers."

The baskets of the Nile tribes are chiefly made of the Doum Palm (vol. ii., p. 265) leaf, woven very durably, and is a remarkably tasteful pattern.

MARRIAGE.

Among the Central African tribes women are generally better treated than is the rule in savage life. Among the Banyai, the wife is—strange to say—the husband's equal. Their land is the elysium of women's rights. Here the husband not only treats his wife with profound respect, but is expected to consult her before concluding any bargain, and to let her know his most private business transactions. The women even do business on their own account, and visit distant towns to effect commercial transactions for their husbands. Unlike most women who attempt business, they can see that there are two sides to a bargain, and never attempt to shield their inability or unwillingness to meet their liabilities under the plea of their sex. The Banyai system of marriage is quite in keeping with this region of the strong-minded—or is it strong-armed?—woman. Among them there is none of the cow-wife bartering transactions. The bridegroom goes humbly to the house of his father-in-law, and meekly submits to be bullied and ordered about by his mother-in-law, not a more amiable lady than usual among the Banyai. He has to carry water, cut wood, and altogether demean himself as becomes his position in life; if he objects to this arrangement he may leave, but his wife and children must remain, unless he can pay as much as will compensate the wife's parents for the loss of her services. In unpleasant contrast with this supremacy of woman, let us look at Uganda, where she is taught her place with the sharp logic of the rod. A special kind of whip made of plaited strips of Hippopotamus hide, with hard, sharp, horny edges, which cut into the flesh at every stroke—worse, indeed, than the "coorbatch" of the slave traders—is reserved for the administration of wifely chastisement. Killing a wife, or a few wives, at a time, is, we have seen, a mere trifle in Uganda. It is scarcely worth taking into account from an Ugandian point of view. Polygamy is the universal custom. The King of Uganda had 300 women in his palace, besides a number more who lived with his mother. Often thirty or forty girls would be offered him in a single morning as wives. If he orders them to seat themselves on their knees, and he embraces them, then the ceremony of marriage is complete, and the fortunate damsels are received into the number of his wives, and parents prostrate themselves before their sovereign, ejaculating the word "N'yanz" (thanks) repeatedly, in such a manner that the ceremony of thanking the sovereign for any favour is described by those travellers who have visited Uganda court as "N'yanzigging." Though sufficiently wifed, yet His Majesty of Uganda is almost a celibate compared with some of the potentates near the coast, whom we shall by-and-by have occasion to speak of. The King of Ashanti, to whom we so recently introduced ourselves after so disagreeable a fashion, is said to have more than 3,000 wives!

The Shillooks, a Nile tribe, are also much addicted to polygamy. Mr. Petherick gives an amusing description of Dood, the chief one of their village, whose acquaintance he made while on a trading expedition. This dignitary pays a visit to Petherick, accompanied by a great mob of followers, and as a preliminary disembarrassed "his mouth with some difficulty of a quid of tobacco the size of a small orange," and sat down. "My first remark was astonishment at the number of his followers, having expected none but his sons. 'Oh, 'tis all right; you don't know my family yet: but, owing to your kind promises, I sent to the cattle-kraals for the boys, and with the pride of a father, he said, 'These are my fighting sons, who have many a time stuck to me against the Dinka, whose cattle have enabled them to wed.' Notwithstanding a slight knowledge of Negro families, I was still not a little surprised to find his valiant progeny amount to forty grown-up men and hearty lads. 'Yes,' he said, 'I did not like to brings the girls and little boys, as it would look as if I wished to impose upon your generosity.' 'What! more little boys and girls! What may be their number, and how many wives have you?' 'Well, I have divorced a good many wives; they get old, you know; and now I have only ten and five.' But when he began to count his children, he was obliged to have recourse to a reed, and, breaking it up into small pieces, said, 'I take no notice of babies, as they often die, you know; women are so foolish about children that I never care for them until they are able to lay a snare.' Like all negroes, not being able to count beyond ten,* he called over as many names, which he marked by placing a piece of reed on the deck before him; a similar mark denoted another ten, and so on, until he had named and marked the number of his children. The sum total, with the exception, as he had explained, of babies and children unable to protect themselves, was fifty-three boys and twenty girls, viz., seventy-three!" In nearly every polygamous tribe in Africa, each woman has her own hut, which causes such a village as the king's palace usually consists of. In Borneo, where this system prevails, owing to the Mohammedan religion being the creed of the land, the wives are forced to be very humble in the presence of their husbands, sinking on bended knees whenever they approach them, and whenever they have occasion to speak to anyone else of the male sex, they must do so only kneeling, and with their heads and faces covered. In all Africa women marry when young. In Borneo, where the period of marriage is later than elsewhere, it generally happens when the girl is about fifteen. Marriage in Borneo is a noisy affair. The bride mounted on an ox, and followed by other oxen carrying her dowry, and accompanied by a shouting crowd of her friends, rides to the bridegroom's house, while her male friends dash up in front at full gallop. The bridegroom on his part is meanwhile galloping about the street, followed by an equally vociferous multitude, and even after he seats himself in his house, the attendant multitude keep up the noisy congratulations outside. The jealousy with which their women are treated is enormous. We have already referred to this when speaking of the etiquette observed in the King of Uganda's palace in reference to his wives. No one is allowed to look on them. In the "palace" visitors must keep their eyes bent on the ground in case they fall upon the court beauties, and death is the punishment of any man who presumes to look at one of the king's wives, should he meet any of them in their walks abroad. Yet the honour of an unmarried woman is valued at but little. If she has a child before her marriage, then this damage is assessed at half her value; in other words, a woman valued at eight cows could, under such circumstances, be had for four.

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* A sweeping conclusion, which, as regards its general application, with every respect to Mr. Petherick, we beg leave to doubt the accuracy of.

In Uganda there are no such things as marriages—such as we understand this ceremony. If a man of rank has a pretty daughter he will give her to the king as a peace-offering; if the king hear that a tributary of his has a daughter fair to look on, he will demand her as part of the tribute due to him. People of less rank are supplied with wives from women captured in raids on other tribes, or from seizures from refractory officers at home. The women are not, however, looked upon as property, though for certain misdemeanours they can be sold into slavery; for smaller offences they are flogged or are made to do the menial services of the household. The marriage ceremony of the king is thus described by Speke; the traveller is paying one of his numerous visits to the king. "Three of the king's wives came in, and offered him their three maiden sisters, 'n'yanzigging' incessantly, and beseeching their acceptance, as by that means they themselves would become doubly related to him. Nothing, however, seemed to be done to promote the union, until one old lady, sitting by the king's side, who was evidently learned in the etiquette and traditions of the court, said, 'Wait, and see if he embraces, otherwise you may know that he is not pleased.' At this announcement the girls received a hint to pass on, and the king commenced bestowing on them a series of huggings, first sitting on the lap of one, whom he clasped to his bosom, crossing his neck with her's to the right, then to the left, and having finished with her, took post on the second one's lap, then on that of the third, performing on each of them the same evolutions. He then retired to his original position, and the marriage ceremony was supposed to be concluded, and the settlements adjusted, when all went on as before."

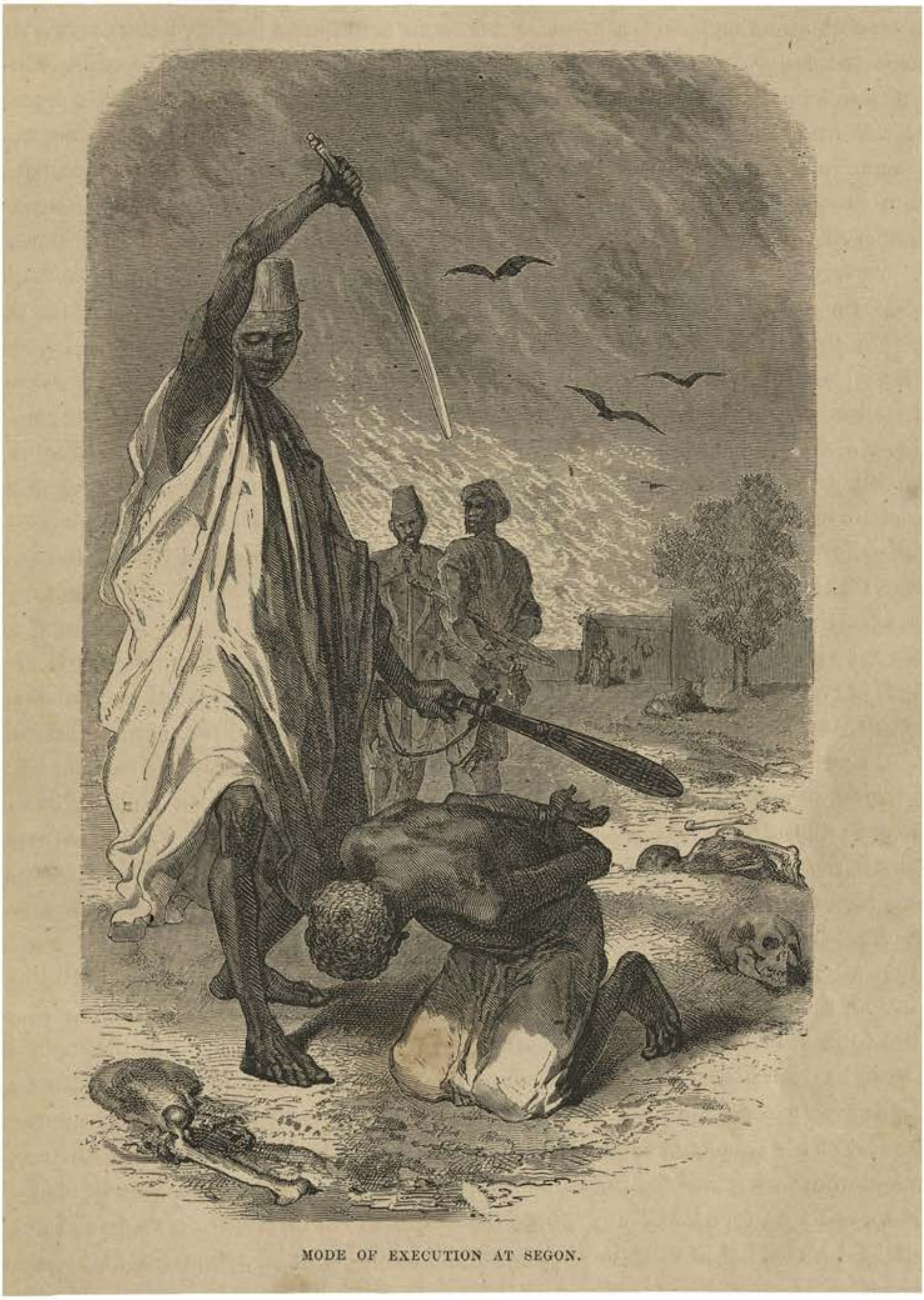
CHAPTER III.

The Central Africans: Birth, Death, Burial, and Religion.

We give a few particulars under each of these heads merely as types of numerous other similar customs prevailing among different tribes. Take the Madi for instance. When a child is born in this tribe, instead of the mother being kept quiet, her female friends assemble about the hut, and, by way of congratulation, make all the noise they can, so far as beating of drums, singing of songs, hand clappings, and shouting out compliments, can effect this purpose. All the time a savage dance is going on, so that the scene is one wild and distracting in the extreme. When the mother recovers, a goat is killed; over the carcase she must step backwards and forwards, though what is the origin or meaning of this mystical rite can only be conjectured. It is doubtful if they know themselves. Another ceremony after recovery is described. The woman takes a handful of dry grass lighted, passes it round her body from hand to hand, as she walks to the left of the door. She again repeats this form as she walks in front and to the left of the door. If twins are born, in some of the Central tribes, one is destroyed, in case drought, famine, or flood should oppress the land. Should the instinct of maternal love tempt the concealment of twins, the whole family, would, on discovery of the deception, be murdered by the chief. Speke heard of a Myoro woman who bore twins that died, and at the date of his visit kept two pots in her house, as effigies of her children, "into which she milks herself every evening, and will continue to do so for five months, fulfilling the time appointed by nature for suckling children, lest the spirits of the dead should persecute her. The twins were not buried, as ordinary people are buried, under ground, but placed in an earthenware pot, such as the Wanyoro use for holding pombé. They were taken to the jungle and placed by a tree, with the pot turned mouth downwards."

The Manganja looks upon the burial places of his race as sacred, and keeps the graves neatly. They are arranged north and south, and on the surface are laid the implements which the sleeper beneath used during life. As we had occasion to note, when speaking of an incidental custom amongst the North American Indians (vol. i. p. 109), these tools are broken; and, perhaps, for a similar reason, viz., to prevent them being stolen by irreverential marauders of their own or other tribes. By the nature of the implements the passer-by can thus tell the occupation, sex, or position of the dead. As mourning, the relatives of the deceased wear strips of palm tied round their heads, necks, breasts, arms, and legs, and allow them to remain until decay, and the wear-and-tear to which they are subject, cause them to drop off. In other tribes—among the Karague people, for example—the place and mode of a man's burial is regulated by his rank in life. If of humble position, his body is sunk in the lake; but if of noble caste (or, as he is styled, a "Wahuma"), then a sacred island is the place of its deposit, and the vicinity of the place of sepulture marked by the symbol of two sticks, tied to a stone, lying across the pathway. No one seeing this mark would dare to go along the holy path; at any inconvenience he would turn aside to reach his destination. The kings are buried like the nobles, but with this addition, that their bodies are first roasted for a month, until they are like sun-dried meat, when the lower jaw is cut off, preserved, and covered with beads. The royal tombs are put under the charge of special officers, who occupy huts erected over them. The umbilical cords are preserved from birth, and, at death, those of men are placed within the door-frame, whilst those of women are buried without. On the death of any of the great officers of state, the finger-bones and hair are also preserved; or if they have died shaven, as sometimes occurs, a bit of their "mbŭgŭ" dress will be preserved in place of the hair. Their families guard their tombs. Grant describes the burial places of the Waganda as huts in the midst of a lawn, through which straight walks led up to the doors of the huts. These were closed from the gaze of the inquisitive by screens of bark cloth. Inside was a cane-bedstead, all curtained, as if to protect the sleeper from mosquitoes, and a series of spears, charms, sticks, tree-creepers, miniature idol-huts, or grass, &c. They are not always so elaborate as just described. More frequently these houses of the dead were mere square plots, surrounded by a reed fence, the whole being known under the name of "Looahleh," *i.e.*, "sacred ground."

The Bari bury their dead within the enclosure of their kraal or homestead, the grave being marked with poles, on which are hung skulls and horns of cattle, and the top decorated with a tuft of cocks' feathers, the national "crest" or distinction of a member of that tribe, and which they wear on their heads during life. The Musgu, one of the rather more civilised African races, are singular in this respect—that they erect monumental mounds over their dead—a custom which obtained extensive popularity among the primitive races of Europe and other countries.



MODE OF EXECUTION AT SEGON.

AMUSEMENTS.

Eating, smoking, sleeping, fighting, dancing, gambling a little, and wrestling, may be said to form in outline the list of a Central African's amusements. Even the exertion necessary to amuse themselves is too much energy for the Negro character. Accordingly, they take little pleasure in the active out-door amusements, which, we have already seen some savages, even lower in the scale of civilisation than they, delight in. Wrestling is about the only manly amusement they care for, for hunting and fishing are their daily occupations, and therefore cannot be looked upon as amusements. Wrestling, however, only practised among the more civilised races, such as the Begharmis, who, though possessed of a certain degree of polish, are very Negro-looking, their skin being black. They are, however, noted athletes. So keenly do they contest in wrestling that it is not an unfrequent occurrence for one of the contestants to be left dead on the ground. Great men among this people will keep in their pay, or as slaves, powerful wrestlers, on whose prowess they highly pride themselves. A wrestler once beaten is looked upon as good as done for altogether, and if a slave, would be sold for a mere moiety of the price he was valued at before meeting with this reverse of fortune. In addition all the Begharmi, but particularly the women, are good dancers, being active and yet graceful in all their movements. Their dancing is a sort of acting in dumb show, and all the while they keep up a low plaintive song, which adds wondrously to the pleasant impression the scene makes on the onlooker.

WAR.

No tribe in Africa can be said to be at any time "in a state of profound peace," nor can the chief, if even he considered such a statement useful or necessary, be able to announce to his tribesmen that he is on "terms of amity" with all, or even a small number, of the surrounding tribes. Fighting, in a more or less disciplined manner, either to avenge some old feud, some recent wrong, or simply for the sake of plundering the cattle and other property of the weaker tribes, or to capture them for slaves, is to a great extent the normal state of many of the Central African kingdoms. In dress and general appearance, the chief object of the African warriors seems to be to strike terror into the beholders, as the reader will have seen when noting the "demon escort" which King Kamrasai sent with Baker, and their conduct while upon that memorable expedition. Want of courage is not a failing that can usually be ascribed to a savage, though the display of courage, unless attended with a corresponding success, does not seem to be valued; nor, on the other hand, is a coward looked upon in the same despicable light that he is among civilised nations. A monarch who "showed the white feather" in Europe, or even among the semi-civilised people of Asia, would for ever incur the contempt of the meanest of his subjects. Not so in Africa, apparently. The kingdom of Unyoro, ruled by Kamrasai, whose weakness for Sir Samuel's portable property we have already more than once alluded to, was threatened with invasion. Instead of the king preparing to defend his kingdom as well as he could, his own brother counselled him to take refuge in flight, probably on the principle,

> "That he who fights and runs away,
> May live to fight another day."

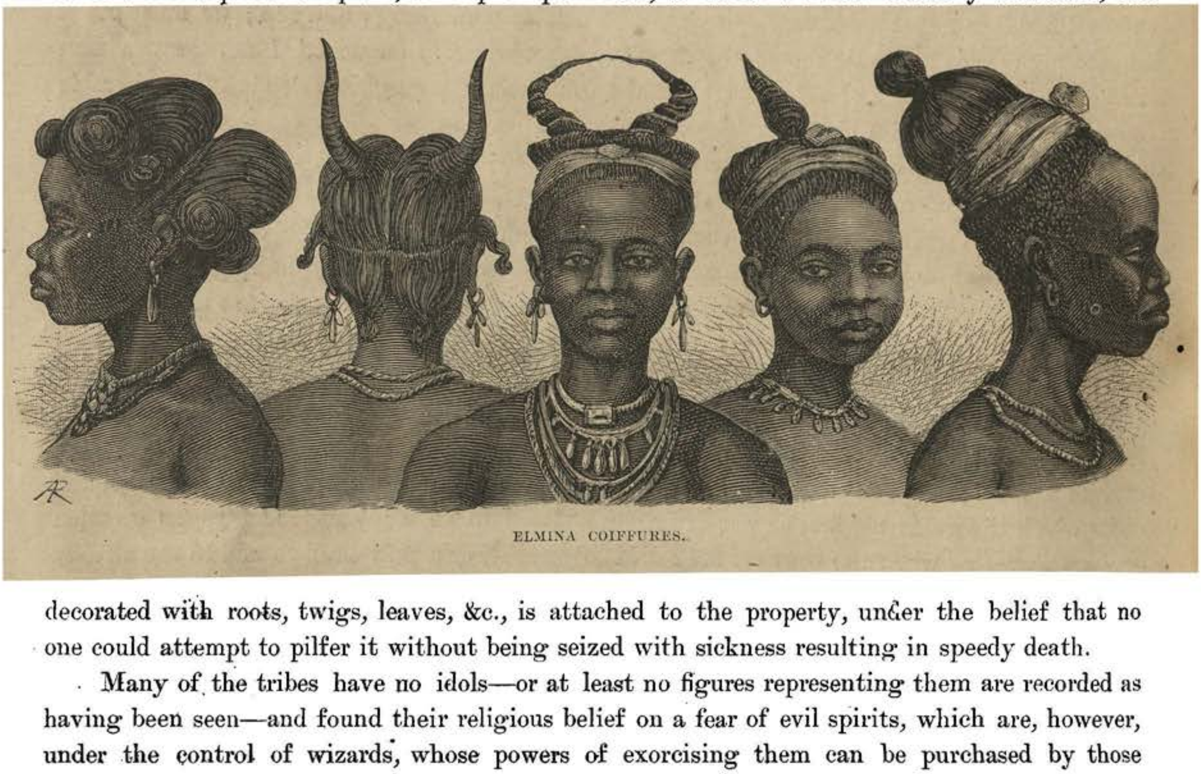
The first intimation that Baker had of His Majesty's unwarlike proclivities, was, to use his own language—"When the king unceremoniously marched into my hut. He was no longer the dignified monarch of Kitwara, clothed in a beautiful mantle of fine skins, but he wore nothing but a short kilt of blue baize that Speke had given him, and a scarf thrown across his shoulders. He was dreadfully alarmed, and could hardly be persuaded to leave his weapons outside the door, according to the custom of the country—these were three lassos and a double-barrelled rifle that had been given him by Speke. I was much amused at his trepidation, and, observing the curious change in his costume, I complimented him upon the practical cut of his dress, that was better adapted for fighting than the long and cumbrous mantle. '*Fighting!*' he exclaimed, with the horror of 'Bob Acres,' 'I am not going to fight! I have dressed lightly to be able to run quickly. I mean to run away. What can fight against guns? These people have one hundred and fifty guns; you must run with me; we can do nothing against them. You have only thirteen men, Eddres [a Turkish slave trader] has only ten; what can twenty-three do against a *hundred and fifty?* Pack up your things and run; we must be off into the high grass and hide there; the enemy is expected every moment.' I never saw a man in such a deplorable state of abject fright, and I could not help laughing aloud at the miserable coward who represented a kingdom."

Though fond of display and practical braggadacio—in this respect being not unlike the Chinese—yet, on occasion, they have shown themselves, even in warfare against the Turkish slave-robbers, a far from unworthy enemy—desperation giving them the courage and force which they might not naturally possess. War as a science they know nothing of. Indeed, they resort to most unstrategic methods of going about it—such, for instance, as the ridiculous habit of the Latookas in sounding a drum—or nogāra—before attacking an enemy, which can but only give the enemy warning of the intended attack, weird and "gruesome" though the echoes may boom in the darkness of the lonely night. Captives in war are usually reserved for slaves. Among the Dôr tribes of the White Nile, the whitened skulls of slain enemies are suspended to the branches of a great tree in the open space of the village, and under which the great nogāra, or war drums, are placed to be ready for sounding as occasion may require—*i.e.*, when the warriors are called to combat, or a new skull to add to the already bounteous crop which the tree bears. This, and the conclusion of a successful attack, is celebrated with a wild war-dance, differing in the "figures," but little in general character from those so common among other savages after their murderous forays.

RELIGION AND SUPERSTITION.

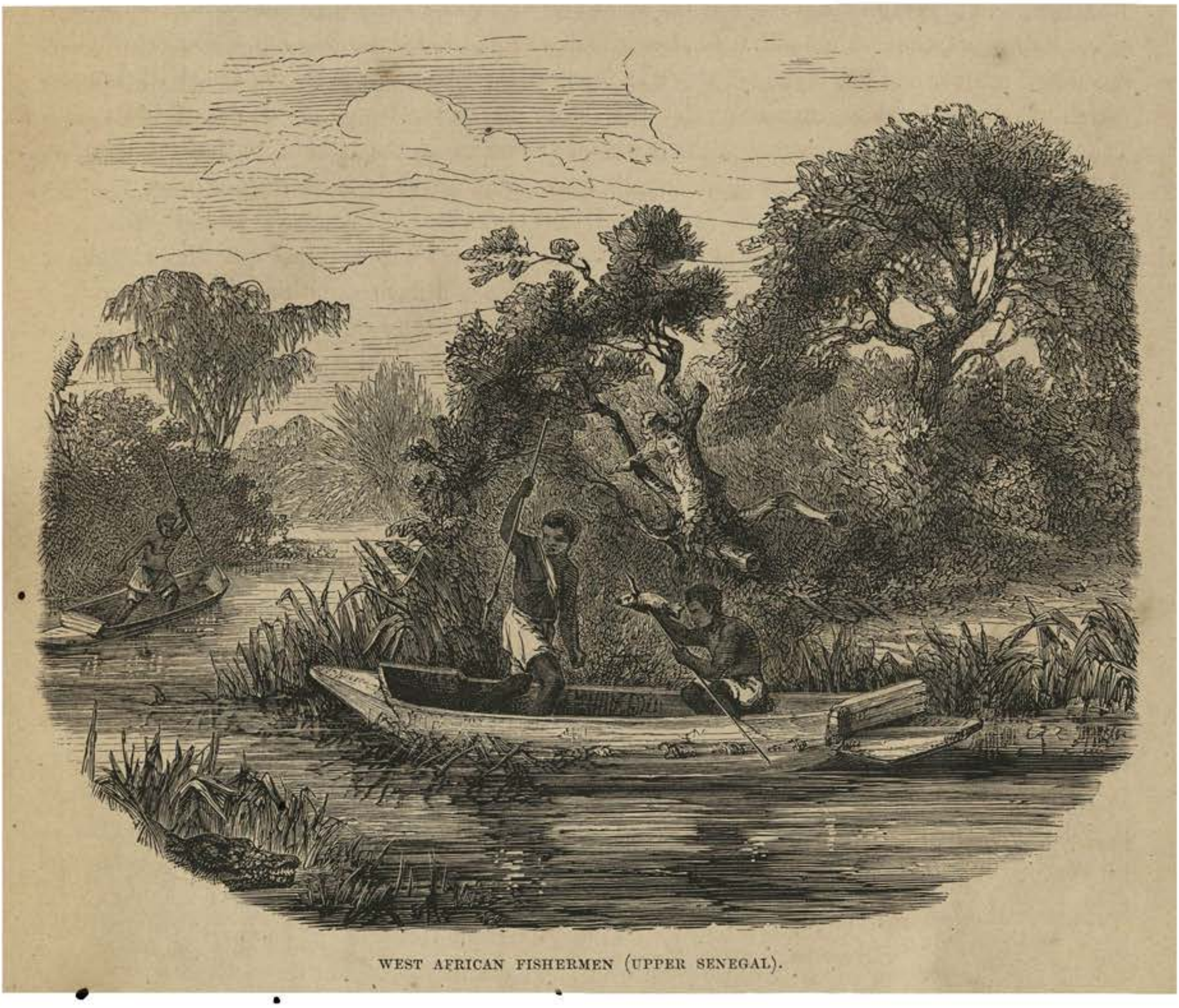
We cannot separate the two mental phenomena which head this paragraph. With all the African tribes religion is superstition and superstition religion. Both are equally dark and gross, though in justice to the Central Africans it must be said that, so far as we have yet learned, neither their religious nor their superstitious rites are disfigured by the abominations that abound in similar rites among the West Coast tribes.

Few of the Central African tribes believe that, psychologically, the black man and the white have anything in common. Christianity, they say, for instance, is good enough for the whites, but won't do for the blacks. Most of them believe in the immortality of the soul, as is proved by the fact that nearly all of the tribes—amongst others the Manganjas—believe that their relatives come and speak to them in their dreams. The spirits of the dead, they believe, can aid and protect them. Under this belief the Banyai people will, when out hunting, pour out the contents of their snuff-boxes as an offering, which may have the effect of so far propitiating their dead friends as to induce them to render the hunting prosperous. Unlike more irreverent people—savage and civilised—the Banyai relies quite as much upon his prayers and snuff, as hunting appliances, as upon his more physical weapons. A belief in a superintending Providence, or in other words in the gods (or "Barima") interfering in the affairs of mortals is thus displayed. Of the great wisdom of hyænas and other wild animals they possess the usual savage high estimate. A hyæna, for instance, heard "laughing" in the woods at night after an elephant is killed, is chuckling at the idea that the hunters will not be able to eat all the flesh, but must perforce leave some to them. An idea, not widely different from the Polynesian custom of *taboo*, also prevails among the Banyai. To guard property left in the woods, or some such unprotected place, a strip of palm-leaf, smeared with some sticky substance, and decorated with roots, twigs, leaves, &c., is attached to the property, under the belief that no one could attempt to pilfer it without being seized with sickness resulting in speedy death.



ELMINA COIFFURES.

Many of the tribes have no idols—or at least no figures representing them are recorded as having been seen—and found their religious belief on a fear of evil spirits, which are, however, under the control of wizards, whose powers of exorcising them can be purchased by those desirous of allaying the evil consequences of the malevolence of these unseen beings. Such a people are the Weeze, who, for Africans, are singularly free from superstition. If a person becomes unwell it is believed that he must have been bewitched. The punishment for this is death, and if the hyænas refuse to touch the body after execution, then it is believed that the sentence must have been superlatively just. About nearly every animal they have the most extraordinary superstitions. The antelope bears the reputation of causing ulcers if its saliva but touches the skin, while the fingers and toes will fall off if its flesh is eaten. Lynx and lion skins are a monopoly of the kings; accordingly no one but he can decorate his person or his dwelling with these royal peltries. The fat which is skimmed off the water in which a lion's flesh is boiled is looked upon as a valuable medicine, but no one must walk around the dead body of a lion, otherwise the spell which prevents these ferocious animals from entering villages would be broken. Two men cement their friendship, not by drinking each other's blood, as is the common method, but by making an incision in each other's body and mixing the blood which flows from the wound on a leaf with butter. The mixture is then rubbed into the wound, and the mixed blood and butter is supposed to make them brothers for life. Kamrasi, the Unyoro King, was surrounded by "Kojoors," or magicians, in whose incantations and charms he placed the most implicit belief. These sorcerers are of both sexes, and are distinguished, according to Baker, "from others by witch-like chaplets of various dried roots, worn upon the head; some of them had dried lizards, crocodiles' teeth, lions' claws, minute tortoiseshells, &c., added to their collection of charms. They could have subscribed to the witches' cauldron of Macbeth :—



WEST AFRICAN FISHERMEN (UPPER SENEGAL).

'Eye of newt, and toe of frog,
Wool of bat, and tongue of dog,
Adder's fork, and blindworm's sting,
Lizard's leg, and owlet's wing,

> For a charm of powerful trouble,
> Like a hell-broth boil and bubble.'

On the first appearance of these women, many of whom were old and haggard, I felt inclined to repeat Banquo's question—' What are these, so withered and so wild in their attire, that look not like the inhabitants o' the earth, and yet are on't? Live you? or are you aught that man may question?' In such witches and wizards Kamrasa and his people believed implicitly. Bachecta, and also my men, told me that when my wife was expected to die during the attack of *coup de soleil*, the guide had procured a witch, who had killed a fowl to question it 'whether she would recover and reach the lake.' The fowl, in its dying struggle, protruded its tongue, which was considered affirmative; after this reply the natives had no doubt of the result. These people, though far superior to the tribes on the north of the Nile in general intelligence, had no idea of a Supreme Being, or any object of worship, their faith resting upon a simple belief in magic, like that of the natives of Madi and Obbo."

A *fetish* is, in African idea, almost anything to which supernatural qualities attach, or is considered to bring good fortune or prevent evil. We will have something to say by-and-by about these when we come to consider the coast tribes, among whom *fetish* worship reigns supreme. The idea also, however, is found among the interior tribes. For instance, certain days King M'tesa and his mother used to set apart to arrange and consult their fetishes, in order to see that nothing was amiss in the kingdom of Uganda. It was, Speke remarks, something like an inquiry into the ecclesiastical condition of the country, and being a religious ceremony is appropriately gone into on the first day after the new moon appears. On the third moon by account the king and all the court shaved their heads, the king, however, retaining his "cock comb," and the pages their double cockades, these being marks of their official ranks. There are certain priests who preside over and direct the rites of religion—at least, in some cases. Such an one is the priest of the Nile lake, who lives in a hut decorated with many mystic symbols—amongst others a paddle, the badge of his high office—on an island in the lake which forms one of the Nile sources (Victoria N'Yanza). This ecclesiastic is only the deputy or familiar of M'gussa, the spirit who presides over the water, and his office is to interpret the secrets they have to tell to the king. He appeared when Speke saw him to be a middle-aged man, but both he and his wife assumed the air and gait of decrepid old people, although their affectation seemed scarcely to impose even on the king, superstitious and credulous as he was. There is even a tract of land dedicated in some mysterious manner to the gods, or to one or other of them. It is a kind of "church estate," although the king could exercise authority over some of the people who lived on it, yet others seem to be viewed in a sacred light, and to be exempt from the control of the civil power; neither had the king any right to dispose of the land. In this church territory there are villages only every fifth mile, and no roads exist through it. These magicians (Mganga) are a sad curse to the traveller, for so thoroughly have they a hold on the minds of the people that if they wish to hamper the movements of the traveller, all they need do is to prophecy all sorts of calamities—droughts, famine, wars—as the consequence of his being allowed to proceed, and the credulously superstitious people will believe him, and do their best to prevent such dire calamities happening by preventing the white man setting his eyes on the soil to be so cursed by his presence. "Their implement of divinition, simple as it may appear, is a cow's or antelope's horn

(Uganga), which they stuff with magic powder, also called Uganga. Stuck into the ground in front of the village, it is supposed to have sufficient power to ward off the attacks of an enemy; by simply holding it in the hand the magician pretends he can discover anything that has been stolen or lost, and instances have been told of its dragging four men after it with irresistible impetus up to a thief, when it belaboured the culprit and drove him out of his senses. So imbued are the natives' minds with belief in the power of charmers, that they pay the magicians for sticks, stones, or mud which he had doctored for them. They believe certain flowers held in the hand will conduct them to anything lost, as also the voice of certain wild animals, birds or beasts, will ensure them good luck or warn them of danger. With the utmost complacency our sable brother builds a dwarf hut in his fields, and places some grain on it to propitiate the evil spirit, and suffers him to reap the fruits of his labour, and this, too, they call their uganga or church. They have also many other and more horrible devices. For instance, in times of tribulation, the magician, if he ascertains a war is projected by inspecting the blood and bones of a fowl which he has flayed for that purpose, flays a young child, and having laid it lengthwise on a path, directs all the warriors on proceeding to battle to step over his sacrifice and ensure themselves victory. Another of these extra-barbarous devices takes place when a chief wishes to make war on his neighbour, by his calling in a magician to discover a propitious time for commencing. The doctor places a large earthen vessel, half full of water, over a fire, and over its mouth a grating of sticks, whereon he lays a small child and a fowl side by side, covers them over with a second large earthen vessel just like the first, only inverted to keep the steam in, when he sets fire below, cooks for a certain period of time, and then looks to see if his victims are still living or dead, when, should there be war, the war must be deferred, but otherwise commenced at once. These extremes, however, are not often resorted to, for the natives are usually content with simpler means, such as flaying a goat, instead of a child, to be walked over; while, to prevent any evil approaching their dwellings, a squashed frog, or any such absurdity, when placed on the track, is considered a specific."*

Human sacrifice, so disgustingly common among the West Coast tribes, is, with the exceptions mentioned, rather a rare feature in the religious rites of the interior tribes. The Wagonda, when they go to war, in addition to the sacrifice of a child for the purpose of the warriors stepping over its dead body, use also the other, and still more inhuman, method of foretelling described, in which a child and a fowl bound together are smothered in the steam of the pots, one inverted over the other. In demons, and their power over men, they place the most implicit belief. Sometimes the wizard will announce that in order to an expedition of any sort being successful the demon requires one man's life, and that another must be ill; and if by any coincidence this happens to come true, then the power of the magician is doubly strengthened over the minds of his devotees and dupes.

The rain-maker is also another popular "institution" in Africa, but, moreover, is rather a perilous one, for if the rain-maker fails in his methods, then his life is in danger. Baker's description of one of these rain-makers is so amusing that I will quote it. The hero is half-chief, half-magician at Obbo, and, at the time the incident happened, old Katchiba, the individual in question, had called on the famous explorer—"There had been no rain for a fortnight. 'Well,' I replied, 'you are the rain-maker, why don't you give your people rain?' 'Give my people rain!' said Katchiba; 'I give them rain if they don't give me goats? You don't know my people; if I am fool enough to give them rain before they give me goats they would let me starve! No, no! let them wait; if they don't bring me supplies of corn, goats, fowls, yams, merissa, and all that I require, not one drop of rain shall ever fall again in Obbo. Impudent brutes are my people! Do you know, they have positively threatened to kill me unless I bring the rain. They shan't have a drop; I will wither the crops, and bring a plague upon their flocks. I'll teach these rascals to insult me!' With all this bluster I saw that old Katchiba was in a great dilemma, and that he would give anything for a shower, but that he did not know how to get out of the scrape. It was a common freak of the tribes to sacrifice the rain-maker should he be unsuccessful. He suddenly altered his tone, and asked, 'Have you any rain in your country?' I replied that we had every now and then. 'How do you bring it? Are you a rain-maker?' I told him no one believed in rain-makers in our country, but that we understood how to bottle lightning (meaning electricity). 'I don't keep mine in bottles, but I have a houseful of thunder and lightning,' he most coolly replied; 'but if you can bottle lightening you must understand rain-making. What do you think of the weather to-day?' I immediately saw the drift of the cunning old Katchiba; he wanted professional advice. I replied, that he must know all about it, as he was a regular rain-maker. 'Of course I do,' he answered, 'but I want to know what you think of it.' 'Well,' I said, 'I don't think we shall have any steady rain, but I think we may have a heavy shower in about four days.' (I said this as I had observed fleecy clouds gathering daily in the afternoon.) 'Just my opinion,' said Katchiba, delighted, 'in four, or perhaps in five days I intend to give them one shower, just one shower; yes, I'll just step down to them now, and tell the rascals that if they will bring me some goats by this evening, and some corn to-morrow morning, I will give them, in four or five days, just one shower.' To give effect to this declaration he gave three toots on his magic whistle. 'Do you use whistles in your country?' inquired Katchiba. I only replied by giving so shrill and deafening a whistle on my fingers that Katchiba stopped his ears, and relapsing into a smile of admiration, he took a glance at the sky from the doorway to see if any sudden effect had been produced. 'Whistle again,' he said; and once more I performed like the whistle of a locomotive. 'That will do, we shall have it,' said the cunning old rain-maker, and proud of having so knowingly obtained 'counsel's opinion' on his case, he toddled off to his impatient subjects. In a few days a sudden storm of rain and violent thunder added to Katchiba's renown, and after the shower horns were blowing and nogāras were beating in honour of their chief. *Entre nous*, my whistle was considered infallible." The magic whistles referred to are made of antelope's horn, and are considered effective to either bring or to stop rain. None of them were accounted worth anything unless they had previously been blessed by the great magician Katchiba. "Shooting medicines" are also in high repute. Indeed, a "medicine" in Negro phraseology means anything which will enable anybody to do something supernatural, or more than he could otherwise accomplish without its aid. Speke's ridicule of "shooting medicines" had no effect on King M'tesa. He only thought it was a joke, and the banter confirmed him the more in the belief that what a white man could consider worth talking so much about or against must be something very powerful. In the most innocent manner in the world, after all Speke's arguments, he inquired whether the gallant captain would "like to have a medicine also."

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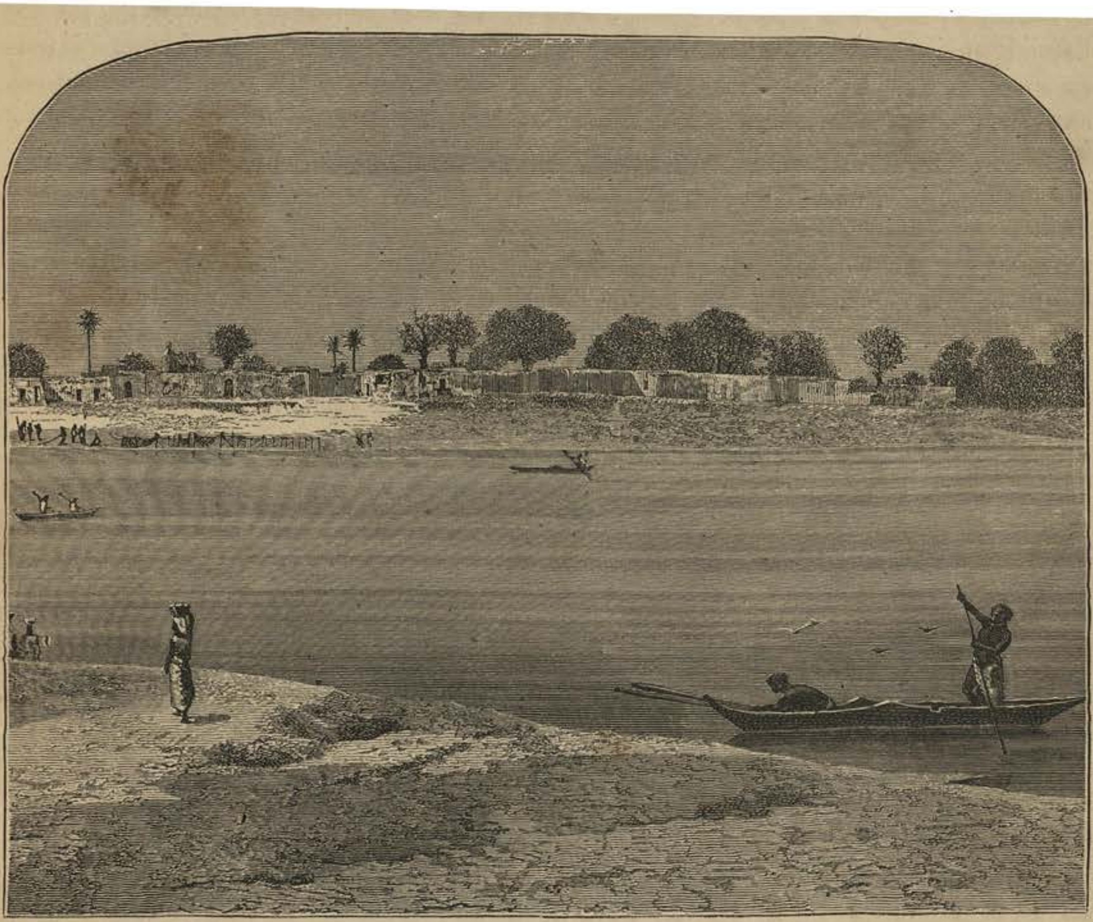
* Speke, "Discovery of the Nile," p 22.

When the Negro becomes a Mohammedan he is a Mussulman of the Mussulmans, and, like renegades generally, is more fanatical in his new faith than he was moderately decent in the observance of his old one. Borneo is an example. Among the slaves of the Arabs at Zanzibar, and elsewhere along the African coast, their new religion sits very lightly on them, and though they are circumcised, and learn to jabber "Allah" and "Mohammed" as frequently, irrelevantly, and, I might add, as gracelessly as, to use Speke's words, "blast" and "damn" are by our sailors, they are really of very little religion at all, notwithstanding the fact that some of them even go through the form of a pilgrimage to Mecca. The Negro is at best *not* a religious man; he cannot for a moment be compared, from a pious point of view, with the South Sea Islanders, or even with the better tribes of North American Indians.



A WEST AFRICAN RIVER FERRY.

The last words I shall add to these notes in regard to the Negroid tribes of Central Africa are a few remarks in regard to some peculiar customs prevalent amongst them, but which cannot be conveniently classed under any of the preceding heads. Such, for example, is the custom of two people changing names, a feature common in savage life; but in Africa there is superadded to it the additional bond, that any two people so doing must for ever after assist each other in any way in their power. We have already alluded to the custom—common to almost every African tribe, more especially those on the East Coast and in the interior—of demanding toll, tribute, ".black-mail," or *hongo*, from every traveller passing through their country. No doubt it originally was exacted from the Arab slave and ivory traders, who, for the sake of keeping on friendly terms with the people, submitted to the extortion, and now it is regularly exacted from all and sundry traders, or simply travellers. The people cannot imagine that any one would care to enter *their* country unless the traveller had something great to gain thereby. The idea of submitting to toil and hardship simply for the sake of gaining knowledge, is in their eyes so paramountly absurd that it is never entertained for a moment; the traveller must be seeking for hidden treasure, or for wonderful medicines, or some of the many things which, though little in the eyes of the black man, are of inestimable value to the wonderful white. Therefore, they not unreasonably argue that he ought to pay well for liberty to go into their country for these purposes; and as the traveller is willing to pay, and the black man likes the hongo, why should the foreigner not bleed? And bleed he does most freely at every step, as we have already seen (vol. ii., p. 314). Such are a few of the customs. When we commenced this paragraph we thought that more would required to have been written under this heading, but all their customs are in our eyes so peculiar, that we find we have left little to be said under the special heading of "Curious Customs." All are curious, and some of them particularly nasty.

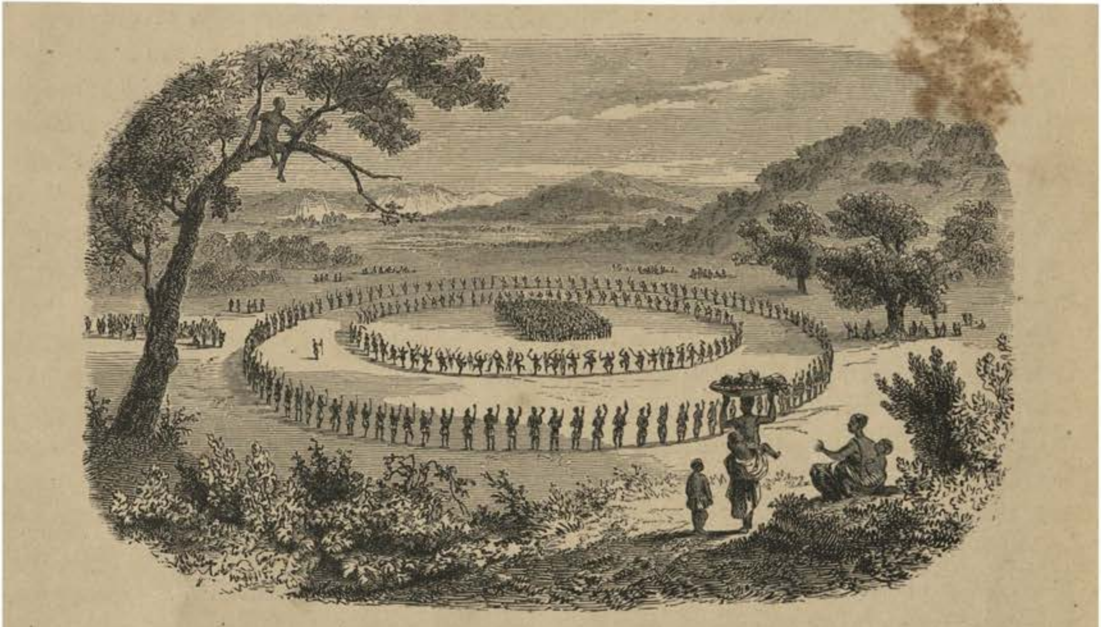
CHAPTER IV.

THE WEST AFRICAN NEGROES: FANTIS, &c.

ALONG the feverish coast of West Africa—in what would be known as Upper Guinea—stretches a long tract of country about 300 miles in length, and extending from the Assime River to the River Volta, or a little beyond, to the frontier of the Negro kingdom of Dahomey. This is the "Gold Coast." The sea coast is low and sandy, but to the east stretches the dense malarious tropical jungle which rises gradually from the shore to the height of about 1,500 feet—the whole territory which goes under this name being about 200 miles in breadth. Visited as early as 1364, by French adventurers from Rouen and Dieppe, it is now ruled as a Crown colony by Great Britain. The chief establishments for trade are at Cape Coast Castle, Elmina, and a few other places, Cape Coast being at present the seat of government. In the interior, and on both sides of the river Prah, which flows through it, are several tribes or nations of kindred race, speaking the same language, or dialect, and governed by native "kings" of a moral complexion scarcely less dusky than their skins. These are the Wassaws, Denkeras, Assin, Akien, Aquapems, Aquamo, Adangme, Krobo, and many other "natives," subdivided into different tribes. All of these have long mingled with Europeans, though they have inherited little from their intercourse, except the vices of their visitors. This coast was long, in common with that lying north and south of it, the active scene of the infamous slave trade. Under the stimulus of the riches or influence acquired through it, some of these petty kingdoms rose into importance, formed new combinations, or fell, as rapidly as they had risen, into obscurity, after the decay of the traffic in human flesh. But by far the most important of all these kingdoms are those of the Fantis and Ashantis, separated from each other by the river Prah; the one—Fanti—lying on the coast, while the other is in the interior. Apparently one people, and speaking almost indentically the same language, they have, since ever the Europeans made their acquaintance, been politically separated—mortal enemies of each other—and, mainly owing to continued disputes in regard to a claim on the part of the Ashantis for free access to the coast, periodically at war with each other. On two of these occasions the British Government have been forced to protect the Fantis from their more warlike enemies, and at the same time their own commercial interests, and accordingly the names of the Fantis and Ashantis (or, as they are generally written, though erroneously, "Fantees" and "Ashantees") have become "familiar in our mouths as household words." Though in everything which constitutes greatness, or is of ethnological interest, the Fantis are much inferior to the Ashantis, yet, owing to the European settlement being in their midst, and their proximity to the sea-coast giving them greater facilities of communication with Europeans, they are more advanced in some respects than the Ashantis. Their habits have a good deal changed by their contact with civilisation, yet sufficiency of superstition and paganism of a very bad type remains to form the material for a page or two. To describe the habits of all the tribes whose homes are on the Gold Coast would be impossible, if it were necessary or expedient. The habits of many—if not most of these tribes—are much the same in all the main particulars, and as types we may in some detail describe the ways of life of the Fantis and Ashantis, similar though many of their habits and customs are. The exigencies of political history compel us, however, to treat of the two nations separately.

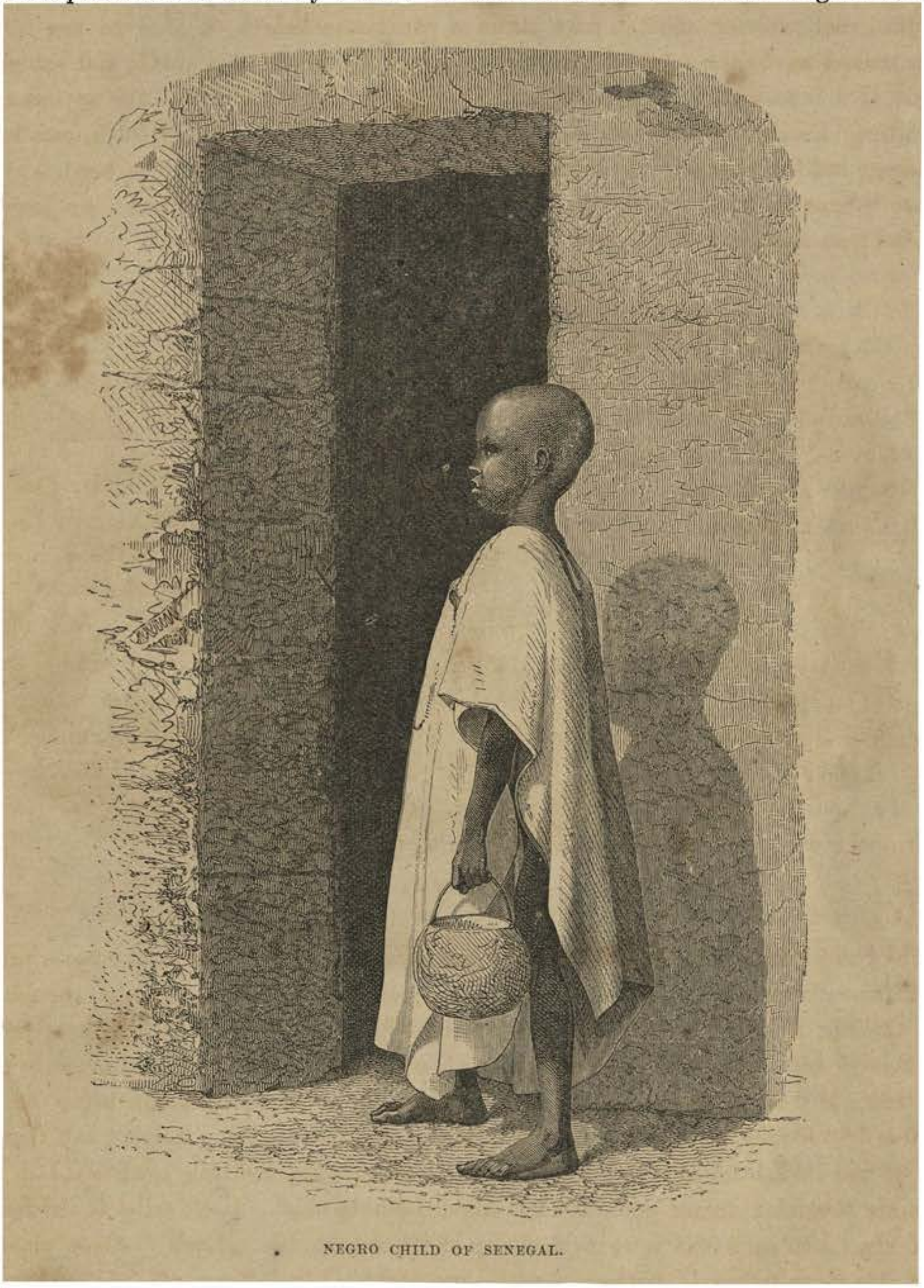
FANTIS.

The Fantis are a lazy, good-for-nothing set at the present time, whatever they might have been in former days. They live along the coast, and chiefly at Cape Coast Castle. Their best quality is that they are fair canoemen, though by no means so skilful at this work as the Krumen, whom we shall have occasion to speak of by-and-by. They are well-made, muscular, and are chocolate-coloured rather than black. All of them are liable to a skin disease known as kra-kra. Their dress is a cloth round the middle, and another over their shoulders, when outside their houses, and which upper garment is taken off when a superior passes them. The women are not good-looking, but have fine figures, spoilt, however, by the "dress improver" or "cankiny" (a name also applied to a loaf of bread) which they wear behind, and is used for carrying the child on (see plate 2). The cloth round her middle she allows to hang down in the form of a petticoat, and, if she is a married woman, then, in addition, there is an end, or another piece, to cover her bosom. She is mentally much superior to the men, being lively and keen with eyes, hands, and tongue. In the last Ashanti war they did the most of the porter work. Both sexes prefer as their "cloths" the gaudiest blue, yellow, or red-striped calico. A girdle or string of beads, made of glass, clay, or gold, according to the wealth of the wearer, is always worn around the waist. Their head-dress is peculiar. The woolly hair, combed out with great patience until it may attain a maximum length of nine to ten inches, and is then trained up in the form of a ridge, supported by means of a comb, and saturated with grease. If it is necessary to add anything to this brief description of the appearance of our late "allies," I may remark that their skin is dry and rough, lips very thick, ears large, chin protruding, and the nose scarcely so flat as that of the typical Negro. The head is round, but the face long, and ornamented with a very scanty beard, while the limbs are large-jointed, bony, and muscular, and (if possible) the women are uglier than the men.



THE BLACK DANCE.

The Fanti territory is divided into four districts, stretching about thirty miles inland, and each of these districts is governed by a king, or sometimes by two joint kings, though the one called Quassie Attah, whose residence is at the village of Mankessim, has the precedence in rank, though not so powerful as some of the other "kings." The combined kings in the Fanti protectorate, it was calculated, could, at the commencement of the last war, bring into the field 60,000 or 70,000 men, though in reality they never attempted to bring forward half that number. Some of the inland tribes are not deficient in courage and fighting qualities, but the coast Fantis are the most arrant cowards that could possibly exist. Each tribe is subdivided into several clans, and each clan is again made up of several families. Each of these clans, like the North American tribes, is distinguished by its "totem" (vol. i., pp. 98, 241), generally some beast or bird. Thus, then, in the panther clan, the hawk clan, and so on, the members of each of these septs being bound to assist and support each other in all trouble as if they were blood relations. Succession to the headship of the tribes is hereditary, and has been in some cases held by women. The king, however, of the confederation of tribes is elected by the tribal chiefs. Their laws are despotic, each chief ruler having power over the life and death of his subjects. Criminals are punished by decapitation, slavery, forfeiture of goods, or by being expelled and exposed to slow death by famine in the wilderness. Innocence or guilt is tested, as in many other portions of Africa, by means of "ordeals." For instance, he is ordered to drink a decoction of some poisonous plant, or to chew a handful of dry rice, when his innocence or guilt is tested by the effect of the "ordeal" on his stomach or his saliva. When the "ordeal" is a poison, he is considered innocent if his stomach rejects it, but guilty if it does not, and



NEGRO CHILD OF SENEGAL.

death, of course, happening in such cases, the man is properly punished for his iniquity. Polygamy is permitted, though seldom practised, for the simple reason that few of the Fantis are rich enough to allow themselves such a luxury. They have, it ought to be noted, one redeeming quality—they provide for their aged parents.

However, when we have reason to speak in disparaging terms of Fanti morality and character generally, we must take into account the circumstances under which his character, at no time very lofty, has so terribly deteriorated. They have long mingled with Europeans, and European influence on the Gold Coast, as in other portions of black Africa, has been invariably corrupting and debilitating. The slave trade was at one time almost the only branch of commerce; at best its influence on the native character was pernicious in the extreme. It has disappeared now, but has not been succeeded by any other branch of legitimate traffic which suffices to stimulate the latent industry of the people. Rum and other articles which tend to corrupt the morals of the people, are almost the only articles of import. Slavery, though no longer a recognised institution, still prevails amongst them; every family of any consequence has its slaves, and to this day, in Cape Coast Castle, men, women, and children are openly bought and sold, nor can the Government well stop it. The Fantis have never until recently been fully recognised as British subjects, and it was even dubious whether Cape Coast Castle was a British or a Fanti town. Probably the result will be, the "institution" will be gradually permitted to die out, though the wretched people have been indebted to the British Government for so many favours that they can scarcely complain of injustice, if even their "vested rights" in these respects were somewhat rudely interfered with by the strong arm of the law.

We have in return for the *moral* loss they have sustained by our presence, attempted to administer an antidote to the vice introduced amongst them by our traders, in the shape of a large dose of missionary instruction. Probably no set of savages have ever been more vigorously plied with good advice at certain places, or entirely neglected at others, than have the Fantis. Certainly none have ever profited less by it. "The aspects of West African heathenism," writes one of the most intelligent of the newspaper correspondents of the war of 1874, "is everywhere a humiliating spectacle. Among the Gold Coast tribes, indeed, it does not present such features of atrocious cruelty as among the Ashantis, in the adjacent kingdom of Dahomey, or in the delta of the Niger.

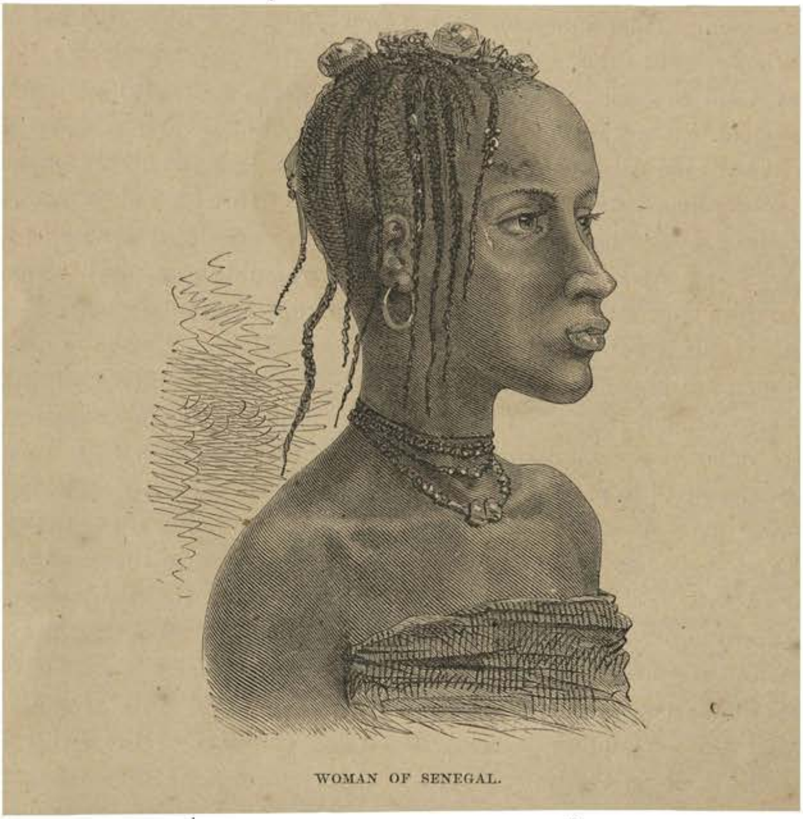
"But this comparative mildness is associated with a lamentable degree of moral weakness and baseness. Apart from the savage vice of cruelty, we should rank the Fantis in the scale of character far beneath those fiercer and sterner nations of African race. They are neither warriors nor artisans, nor skilful and careful cultivators of the earth. They have no permament buildings, no staple manufactures, no taste for ornamental design, no original inventions. Only a few of them, in the towns, become tolerable carpenters. In these respects, it is likely enough that their progress has been retarded by the prejudicial kind of trade brought to the coast, and by the abundant supply of slave labour."

Tropical Africa is essentially a land of vegetarians. Nature produces vegetable food with no niggard hand, and as exertion is what a Negro hates most of all things, he prefers to subsist on what is most easily got at. If he could get animal food as easily, he would take it in preference, or at least as readily, for the idea that people in tropical climates prefer vegetable to animal food for a physiological reason, is nonsense. Where animal food is abundant they eat it readily, and without any inconvenience. The Fanti women are excellent marketers, while the men catch considerable quantities of sea-fish. A favourite dish, at the making of which the women excel, is a soup of a very savoury character, made of fish or fowl, with hard-boiled eggs, rice, and Cassava root. "Tiger-milk," another dish made of the starchy matter got by boiling an esculent tuber, is pronounced by connoisseurs to be very excellent. Ground maize, or any other tropical grain, with the flesh of the monkey, alligator, or fish in a putrid state, is their common food: sharks' fins being used by them, as among the Chinese, as a dainty. Other varieties of food are supplied by yams, sweet potatoes, gourds, cucumbers, bananas, pine-apples, &c., all plentiful in their season. Palm wine is used, but rum is preferred when they are not imbibing simply for conviviality, but as they say (and as is usually the case) "drinking for drunk."

A white clay, used to wash the interior of their huts, is frequently chewed, or drunk in solution, on the Gold Coast, the young people, according to Mr. Winwood Reade, taking it as a sweetmeat, and the old people as a medicine for heart disease and other complaints.

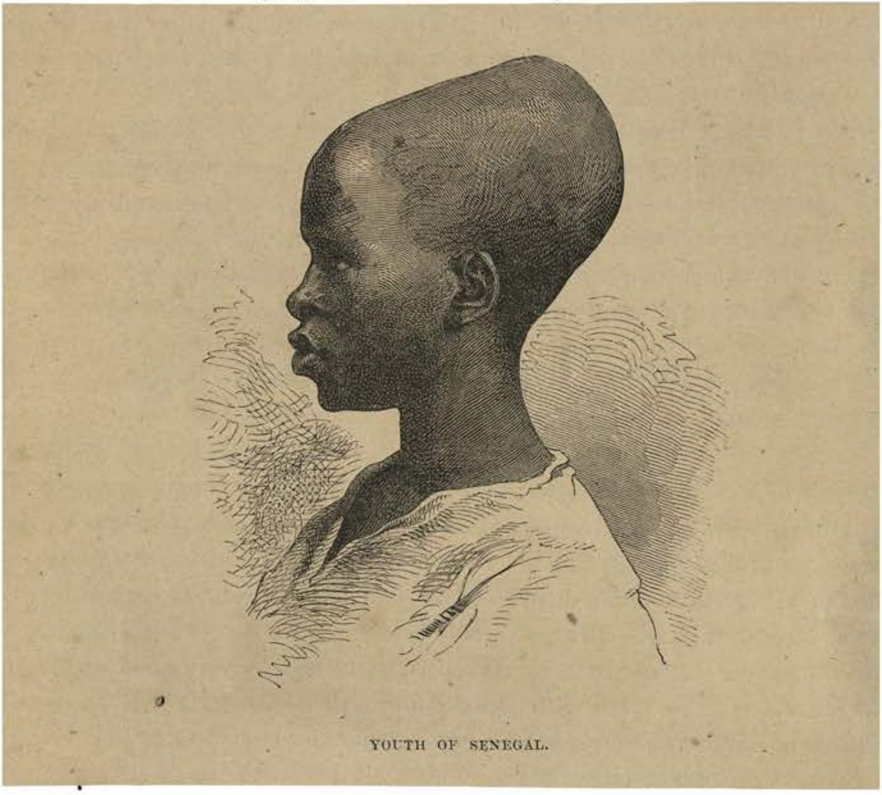
Though mingling long with Europeans, the Fantis are, as we have already mentioned, only very partially civilised, even when using the term in the very modified meaning which must be attached to it when an African is the individual to whom it is applied. They have only abandoned their Pagan superstition to a very slight degree. Superstition, and all the absurdities and abominations of the fetish, still remain in full force. If in any case the grosser forms of their former religion are gone, they have only disappeared into obscurity through fear of the ridicule of the European, not from any idea of their wrongness or ridiculousness, from the light thrown on their mind by the civilisation in contact with which they daily come, little as it may be in most cases fitted to prejudice them in favour of the morality attaching to the new form of faith which the white-faced strangers are supposed to profess, if not to practice. Their religion, such as it is, compels them to keep more holidays than a Spaniard does saint-days, and the fervour of their zeal is accompained with so much noise that it is scarcely possible to live in a Fanti town during the prevalence of these pious pandemonia. Drums are beaten, horns are blown, and everybody conspires, to the best of their ability and strength of lungs, to produce as much din as possible. In the "Wanderings of a F.R.G.S." (we believe it is no secret to say that this is Captain Burton), the religious ideas of the Fanti are described as being vague and indistinct—the usual case in Africa. "Each person has his Samán—literally a skeleton or goblin—or private fetish, an idol, rag, fowls' feathers, bunch of grass, and so forth; to this he pays the greatest reverence because it is nearest to him. The Bosorus are imaginary beings, probably of ghastly origin, called 'spirits' by the missionaries. Abonsám is a malevolent being that lives in the upper regions. Sasabonsám is the friend of witch and wizard, hates priests and missionaries, and inhabits huge silk cotton-wood trees in the gloomiest forests; he is a monstrous being, of human shape, of red colour, and with long hair. The reader will not fail to remark the simularity of Sasabonsám to the East Indian Rákshasha, the malevolent ghost of a Brahmin, brown in colour, inhabiting the pepul tree. Nyankupon, or Nyawe, is the supreme deity, but the word also means the visible firmament or sky, showing that there has been no attempt to separate the ideal from the the material. This being, who dwells in Nyankuponfi or Nyankuponkroo, is too far from earth to trouble himself about human affairs, which are committed to the Bosorus. This, however, is the belief of the educated, who doubtless have derived something from European systems; the vulgar confound him with sky, rain, and thunder. 'Kra,' which the vocabularies translate 'Lord,' is the Anglicised okro, or ocroe, meaning a favourite male slave, destined to be sacrificed with his dead master; and 'sansum,' spirit, means a shadow, the man's *umbra*."

Circumcision, though not a universal custom, is practised in some sacred spot—at Accra, for instance, on a rock rising out of the sea. Their religion is the religion of "fetish," so widely prevalent over Africa. It consists essentially in investing, for the time being, certain animate or inanimate objects with life, and attaching divine attributes and powers to the fetishes thus made by their own hands. A fetish may also consist of "certain kinds of things, times and places, or signs and seasons. Each of these is supposed to be guarded by its own special god, or rather malignant demon, whose displeasure must be averted through sacrifices or other acts of worship. A mountain, a river, a rock, a tree, a species of beast, bird, fish, reptile, or insect, a day of the year or week, a gesture or bodily function, a name, word, or number, is frequently invested, by their dreamy fancy, with the attributes of fetish deity. Even the most insignificant and contemptible straws, chosen apparently by mere caprice, or for the mere sake of oddity or novelty, acquire this sacramental force of wonder and terror. Trees of peculiar growth become very great fetish when they stand in the courtyard of a house, or in the middle of a village street. The trunk is then protected by a boarding or palisade around it. The people come to pour libations of rum or palm wine over its roots, afterwards



WOMAN OF SENEGAL.

casting down the fragments of their broken bottles. Fetish is well pleased, they say, "to be made jolly drunk." An immense variety of charms or amulets, sacred toys, and talismans, often made of the teeth or claws of wild animals, are sold by the fetish priests and priestesses. These ministers of religion are a sort of wizards and witches. The sacrifices to their fetish offered by families and tribes, consist of oxen, sheep, goats, and fowls, but not, among the Fantis, of human victims. Each tribe observes its own weekly fetish Sabbath, which may be Tuesday for one, Wednesday or Friday for another (as they may happen to be fishermen, bushmen, &c). The rock called Tabara, upon which Cape Coast Castle is built, is a distinguished local fetish. The people take care to sweep and wash it at stated times. "On a certain night in December the townsfolk or villagers of every place assemble for the purpose of driving out the devil. The salutary work is performed by a noisy procession, with beating of tom-toms, blowing of horns, screaming and howling from throats of men and women. They walk through every lane, nook, and corner, entering all the houses, and thumping the walls and roofs till they think the devil is chased away. After his supposed departure, they celebrate the victory by feasting, dancing, and drinking of much rum."* This is the noisy piety we referred to in a former page (51).



YOUTH OF SENEGAL.

Among all their extraordinary superstitions, not the least astounding is their belief in a child "which has existed from the beginning of the world," and yet has never ate or drank during all this time, and of course cannot be expected to grow. The plan pursued is to borrow a baby, when any one is found rich enough to pay for the gratification of his curiosity, and then to paint it with coloured clays in such a manner that it cannot be recognised as belonging to this world. The guardian is generally a hideous old woman, who must be quite cognisant of the swindle she is perpetrating, though, strange to say, Fantis of fair education have been known to believe in this ridiculous imposture.

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* Correspondent of the *Illustrated London News*, 1874.

Cannabalism does not, now, at least, exist among the Fantis or Ashantis, though when General Sir Charles Macarthy was killed in the first Ashanti war, it is said that his heart was eaten by the latter people in order to give them a share of his courage—a belief we have seen to be very widely spread. Human sacrifices, though so very common among the Ashantis, have now fallen into disuse among those tribes living along the sea-board; there is, however, little doubt but that at one time they were as common among the Fantis as they are now among their ferocious neighbours, the Dahomans or Ashantis.

Morality, it is hardly needful to remark, notwithstanding the fervidity of Fanti piety, does not flourish in any marked degree amongst them. After three hundred years of the slave trade and the palm oil peddlers, it would be remarkable if every form of iniquity had not flourished rankly, as in a congenial soil, among the Fanti. And so it does.

Polygamy, we have seen, is permitted, though, for financial reasons, is not often practised. The women, as become their character as the more intellectual and energetic sex of the Gold Coast, maintain the right of divorcing a husband if he shows cowardice in battle. I fancy this privilege must have fallen into abeyance, otherwise there would perforce be abundance of Benedicts in Fanti-land.

A Fanti lives to a good old age; white hair is nothing uncommon amongst them; but die he must in due course, by rum, or in the natural course of events. Great pomp is the rule on such occasions. Professional mourners—Negro mutes—are hired for the event; a sheep is killed for the funeral feast, and the shoulder-blade laid on the grave, where it is permitted to remain for some length of time. The man who buries another succeeds to his property—but he also succeeds to his debts. In the first case the heirs take very good care to put their deceased relative under ground, but with the defaulting debtor there is not the same stimulus on the part of his relatives to perform the funeral obsequies on his behalf. It is bad enough to have the trouble and expense of burying, but to be saddled with the debts after performing this good office is simply outrageous! Accordingly, in the vicinity of every Fanti village, corpses will be found lying exposed on a platform, merely covered with a cloth, nobody having been found courageous enough to bury them. As on every other occasion of Fanti mirth, grief, or piety, insufferable noise accompanies the funeral rites. If the deceased has been a man of any note, all his friends—and the great man, as all the world over, has in Fanti-land an infinitude of friends, even after he is dead—squat in front of the house and celebrate the inauspicious event by drinking, yelling, singing, smoking, and firing of muskets. A dog is sacrificed before the hut, after which the corpse is buried along with considerable sums of money, gold, and jewels of some value. The first thing an enemy does in entering the Fanti country is, accordingly, to rifle the graves, though, indeed, this is sometimes performed by the relatives themselves, in spite of all the terrors of fetish and demon.

The *amusements* of the Fantis are few. Yelling and dancing seem to be the only exertion they care to incur, and, considering their insurpassable laziness, it is wonderful with what energy they go into these amusements aforesaid. The "figure" in their favourite dance is not very complicated. A couple stand opposite each other and beat the ground alternately with either foot. This goes on, the force with which the feet are brought down increasing every minute until finally the stamps culminate in a series of leaps, accompanied by an outward sweep of arms, the palms of the hands being at the same time brought together with a loud clap. This exciting and elegant amusement goes on until the dancers are exhausted, when they give place to another "set."

Laziness is the salient minor vice of the Fanti. In this they excel, nor can anything better be expected of them. They live under a tropical sun; they have an example of lassitude in the European community which it would be bad manners not to copy—especially when it agrees so well with their own inclinations; and, above all, exertion can scarcely be expected of people whose only ambition is to provide for their daily wants. Now on the Gold Coast a native can live luxuriantly on a penny a day, and the exertion of a few hours per week will supply him with all he requires in the way of rum, gaudy Manchester goods, and tobacco. Even then—so runs Fanti logic—what necessity is there for him exerting himself to procure even that? *His wife* can do so. Accordingly in Fanti-land there is an equitable division of labour—the wife *earns* the living and the husband *consumes* it. It is only fair to say that in some cases the husband undertakes to earn the rum and tobacco; but his self-denial goes no further; he invariably disposes of these himself. Add to this laziness, they are dirty in the last degree; but their dirtiness is racial; it is the laziness which strikes a visitor most of all, for though no African is fond of exerting himself, still in some tribes there is a little of something like aptitude or inclination for work. But a Fanti knows not what is the meaning of this term; a hundred will not do as much as a dozen English navvies, and if allowed to be without supervision they will speedily shirk their work by lying down and basking in the sun. A native overseer is useless; he is just as bad as the rest. Every burden is carried on the head. In carrying stones from a heap—or such-like work—they will walk backwards and forwards, carrying one stone at a time balanced on their head, even though the distance be a mile or more. A wheelbarrow never enters into their calculations. The story goes that once on a time some contractor for masonry work about Cape Coast Castle introduced wheelbarrows; but this did not expedite matters much. The Fanti labourers simply put one stone into each wheelbarrow, and then hoisted stone and barrow both on their heads and trotted off! This is only equalled by the tale of how a neighbouring potentate—the King of Dahomey, about whom we may have a good deal yet to say, received the present of a carriage from some wealthy slave trader. Wheeled carriages being a novelty to his subjects, when he first appeared in public his slaves instantly seized it, and bore his majesty and carriage, palanquin-fashion, on their shoulders through his capital. The tale is not bad, but there is a suspicion—just a suspicion—of a lie about it, for the same story is told of more than one savage potentate.

CHAPTER V.

THE WEST AFRICAN NEGROES; ASHANTIS.

THOUGH the Ashantis scarcely differ in dialect from their enemies the Fantis, yet, from being long isolated from the neighbouring tribes, owing to their somewhat unamiable character, their habits are in many particulars different from those of the Fantis, though still possessing a general family likeness. It is probable that both nations, though now broken up into numerous tribes, were originally one people, who, owing to those restless movements which often originate among semi-civilised or savage races, had migrated from the interior of the continent towards the West Coast.

Their own tradition is, that they formerly lived together in a country to the north. A great famine obliged them to migrate southward. The ancestors of those now on the Gold Coast went away first. They fed upon cabbage and other herbs, which in the Otyr language are called "Fan." Hence they received the name of "Fan-didis," or "Fantis," the word "didi" meaning to eat. The second emigrant portion of that primitive race, finding the lands nearer the sea already occupied, had to settle about the Adansi hills, north of the Prah. They subsisted on grain, which is called "san" or "sian," pronounced "shan." The generic name of "Shandidis," or "Shantis," by strangers turned to "Ashantis," was therefore given to this people. There may be some truth in this tradition, and, indeed, at the present day the Ashantis are more disposed to agriculture than the Fantis; the Arsin, Akim, Denkira, and Aquapim "nations" seem intermediate between the Fanti and Ashanti people, though their difference is not so great as between Spaniards and Portuguese, or any of two or three of the European people belonging to one group, such as Swedes, Danes, and English. Our first positive knowledge of the Ashanti kingdom dates, however, not later than 1700, when Osai Tootoo, the king of that date, built the capital at Coomassie. The name "Osai" is common to all the Ashanti kingdoms, and is therefore equivalent to the "Pharoah" of the Egyptians or the "Cæsar" of the Romans—an instance of a personal or family name being converted into a title of honour or of royal dignity. To trace the rise and progress of a savage monarchy would be an idle task; much is traditional, and all more or less obscure; and in no case is the labour of the historian worthy of the subject. Of late we have been hearing rather more about them than is agreeable. Owing to a long-continued dispute in reference to a right of exit to the sea coast, they are constantly at war with the Fantis. On two occasions—the last of which was in 1873-74—the British Government, in meeting the responsibilities of their protectorate, were unfortunate enough to come into a close acquaintance with these sable warriors. On both occasions, however, we saw but little of our enemies, and these only in battle; so that our chief authority for their manners and customs is still the work of a clerk in the old West African Trading Company—a Mr. Bowdich, who, in 1817, resided, for the purpose of negociating a treaty, a considerable time in their capital.* Various

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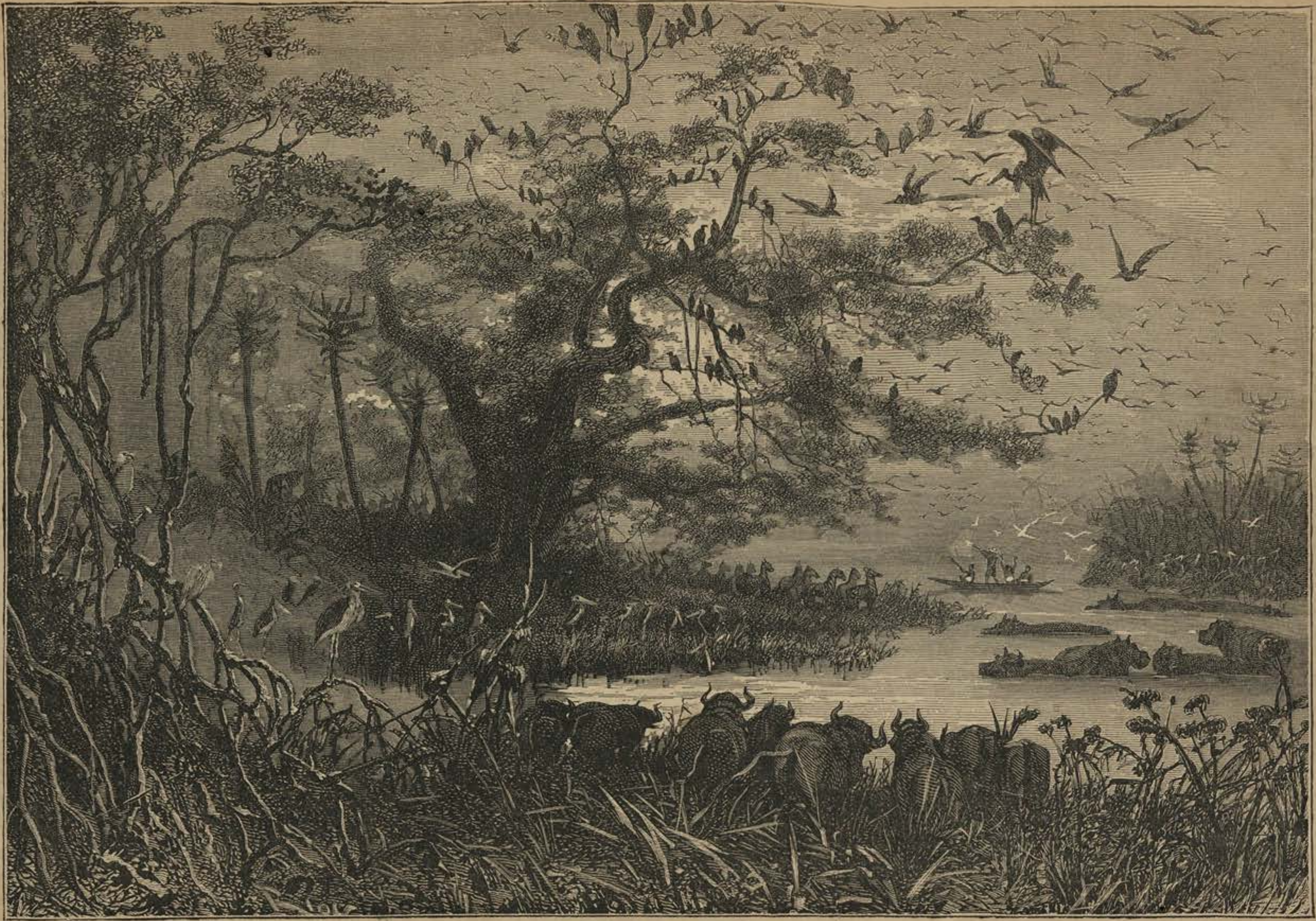
* "Mission from Cape Coast Castle to Ashantee, with a statistical account of that kingdom, and geographical notices of other parts of the interior of Africa, by T. Edward Bowdich, Conductor," 1819 (new edition, 1873).



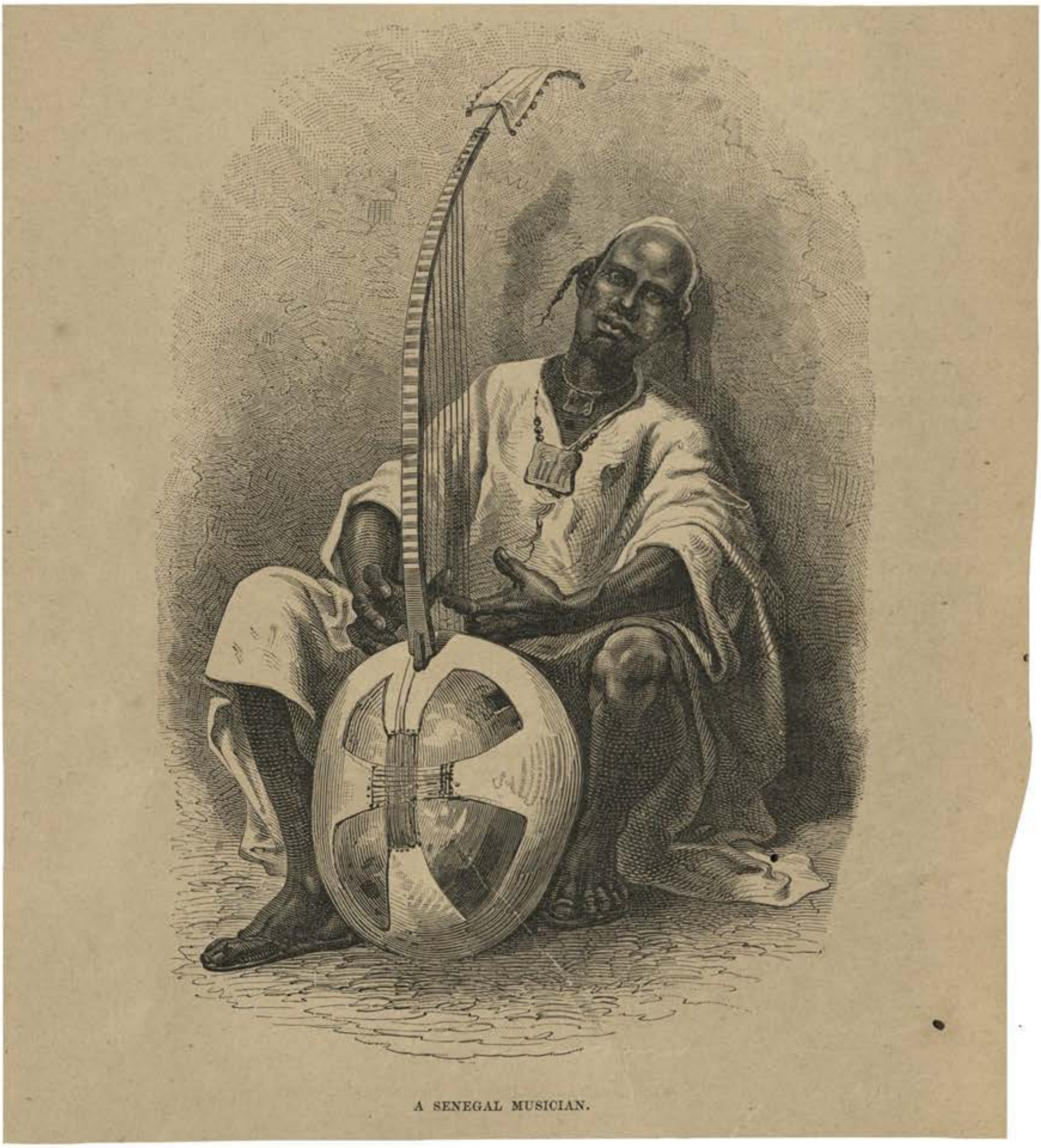
SCENE IN AN AFRICAN SWAMP.

other travellers have visited them, but the work referred to is the one we shall, in the pages which follow, chiefly rely upon, supplementing it by notes derived from the correspondents of the press, who accompanied the expedition under the command of Sir Garnet Wolseley in 1873-74. Whatever the Fantis might have been, the Ashantis are now, at all events, a much superior people, intellectually, and, if courage is a virtue, morally also. Barbarous, no doubt they are, but still it is an abuse of the term to call them savage. In their government they display no little force and order, and a well-established system of political institutions, the history of which can be traced for at least two centuries. Statesmanship-like ability and military skill are distinguished features of the aristocracy of the kingdom, and the common people display so much courage in battle, that there is little doubt but that within the Ashanti kingdom there lies the element of a great African military empire, provided the people were efficiently trained and supplied with the appliances of modern warfare. Even among such strong-minded men, there is hopes that under moral influences, stronger than those they have yet come in contact with, the very superstitions—black and cruel though they be—which at present give them a pre-eminence over their neighbours, would give way to something nobler, purer, and more moral.

Though not so powerfully made as the Fanti, the Ashanti warriors are infinitely more courageous; and the women are much better looking than their ill-favoured Fanti sisters. They are looked upon as a regular article of merchandise, and nothing astonished the Ashanti warriors more than that, when we captured in the late war a couple of women, we let them go free. "What a curious people these white men are to send the women away! *Why this is money!*" was their commentary on our philanthropy, or rather *philogyny*. A woman among them is always worth at least four or five pounds, and a very attractive damsel may fetch as much in the matrimonial market as seven pounds.

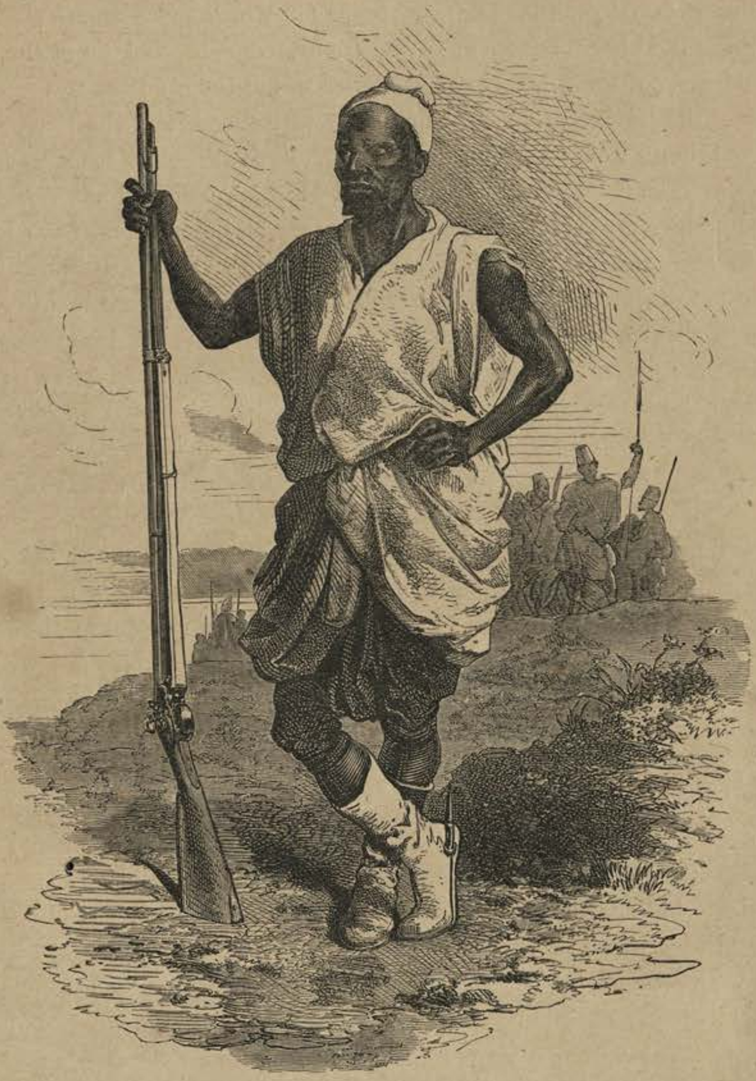
The name "Gold Coast" was derived from the amount of gold traded there from the natives from the earliest time, and out of which gold the "guineas" were originally made: hence the name. In our late war we saw so little gold, either in the shape of ornaments or in any other form, that an idea has got abroad that the riches of the Ashanti empire have been very much exaggerated. If Bowdich is correct, and there is no reason to believe that he is not, then our enemies have been much too sharp for us in removing their treasures, or the glories of Ashanti have departed. Most probably the first surmise is the most correct one. I will give Mr. Bowdich's own language:—"Upwards of 5,000, the greater part warriors, met us with awful bursts of martial music—discordant only in its mixture, for horns, drums, rattles, and gong-gongs were all exerted with a zeal bordering on frenzy, to subdue us by the first impression. The smoke which encircled us, from the incessant discharge of musketry, confined our glimpses to the foreground; and we were halted whilst the captains performed their Pyrrhic dance in the centre of a circle formed by their warriors, where a confusion of flags—English, Dutch, and Danish—were waved and flourished in all directions, the bearers plunging and springing from side to side, with a passion of enthusiasm only equalled by the captains, who followed them, discharging their shining blunderbusses so close that the flags now and then were in a blaze, and emerging from the smoke with all the gestures and distortions of maniacs; their followers kept up the firing around us in the rear. The dress of the captains was a war-cap with gilded rams' horns projecting in front, the sides extended beyond all proportion by immense plumes of eagles' feathers, and fastened under the chin with bands of cowries; their vest was of red cloth, covered with fetishes and saphies (scraps of Moorish writing, considered powerful charms against witchcraft and all other misfortunes) in gold and silver, and embroidered cases of almost every colour, which flapped against their bodies as they moved, intermixed with small brass bells, the horns and tails of animals, shells, and knives; long leopards' tails hung down their backs over a small bow covered with fetishes. They wore loose cotton trousers, with immense boots of a dull red leather, coming half-way up the thigh, and fastened by small chains to their comtouch, or waist-belt; these were also ornamented with bells, horses' tails, strings of amulets, and innumerable shreds of leather; a small quiver of poisoned arrows hung from the right wrist, and they held a long iron chain between their teeth with a scrap of Moorish writing affixed to the end of it. A small spear was in their left hand, covered with red cloth and silk tassels. Their black countenances heightened the effect of this attire, and completed a figure scarcely human. This exhibition continued about half an hour, when we were allowed to proceed, encircled by the warriors, whose numbers, with the crowds of people, made our movements as gradual as if it had taken place in Cheapside; the several streets stretching off to the right presented long vistas crammed with people, and those on the left hand—being on an acclivity—innumerable rows of heads rose one above another, the large open porches of the houses, like the fronts of stages in small theatres, were filled with the better sort of females and children, all impatient to behold white men for the first time; their exclamations were drowned in the firing and music, but their gestures were in character with the scene. When we reached the palace, about half a mile from the place where we entered, we were again halted, and an open file was made, through which the bearers were passed, to deposit the presents and the baggage in the house assigned to us. Here we were gratified by observing several of the caboceers pass by with their trains, the novel splendour of which astonished us. The bands, principally composed of horns and flutes, trained to play in concert, seemed to soothe our hearing into its natural tone again by their wild melodies, whilst the immense umbrellas, made to sink and rise from the jerkings of the bearers, and the large fans waving around, refreshed us with small currents of air, under a burning sun, clouds of dust, and a density of atmosphere almost suffocating. We were then squeezed, at the same funeral pace, up a long street to an open-fronted house, where we were desired by a royal messenger to wait for the invitation from the king. Here our attention was forced from the astonishment of the crowd to a most inhuman spectacle, which was paraded before us for some minutes; it was a man whom they were tormenting previous to sacrifice. His hands were pinioned behind him, a knife was passed through his cheeks, to which his lips were noosed like the figure of eight, one ear was cut off and carried before him, and the other hung to his head by a small bit of skin; there were several gashes in his back, and a knife was thrust under each shoulder-blade. He was led by a cord passed through his nose by men disfigured with immense caps of shaggy black skins, and drums beat before him. The feeling this horrid barbarity excited must be imagined."

This was Bowdich's first introduction into Coomassie. His descriptions of the splendours which he saw, though doubtless coloured with the rosy hues which generous minded youth lends to some very dull spectacles, bears the impress of truth; indeed, his description of Coomassie in 1821 would have answered to the Coomassie that was in 1874. The king was surrounded by crowds of captains, tributaries, and attendants, from whose breastplates of gold the bright sun was reflected. More than a hundred bands burst at once on the arrival of the embassy, that of each chief striking up the music affected by its master. "At least a hundred large umbrellas, or canopies, which could shelter thirty persons, were sprung up and down by the bearers with brilliant effect, being made of scarlet, yellow, and the most showy cloths and crowned on the top with crescents, pelicans, elephants, barrels, and arms and swords of gold; they were of various shapes, but mostly dome; and the valances (in some of which small looking-glasses were inserted) fantastically scallopped and fringed; from the fronts of some,



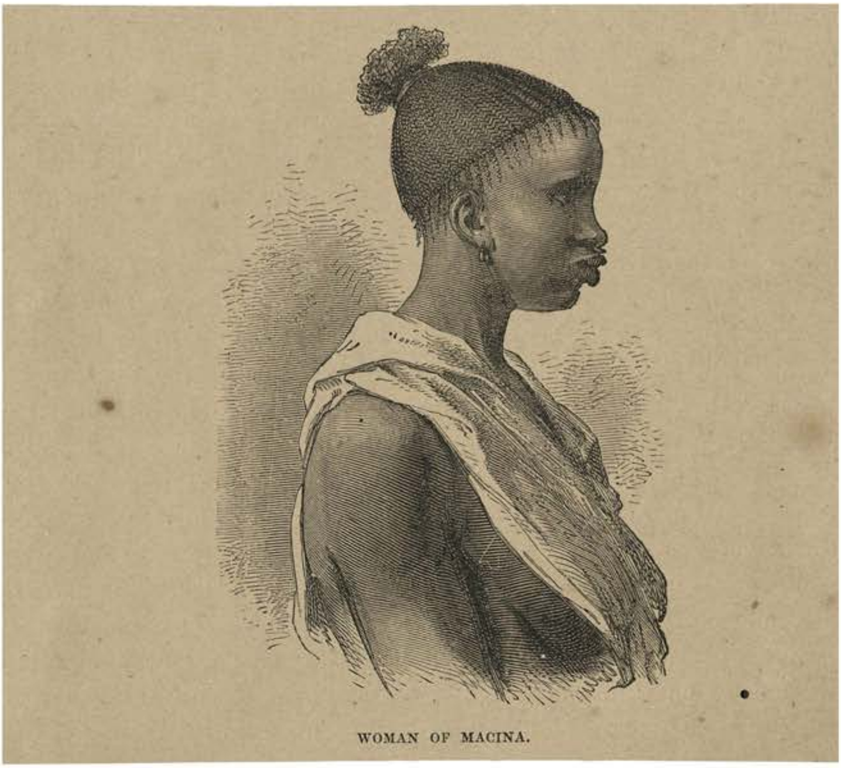
A SENEGAL MUSICIAN.

the proboscis and small teeth of elephants projected, and a few were roofed with leopards' skins and crowned with various animals naturally stuffed. The state hammocks, like long cradles, were raised in the rear, the poles on the heads of the bearers; the cushions and pillows were covered with crimson taffeta, and the richest cloths hung over the sides. Innumerable small umbrellas, of various coloured stripes, were crowded in the intervals, whilst several large trees heightened the glare by contrasting the sober colouring of nature. The king's messengers, with gold breastplates, made way for us, and we commenced our round, preceded by the canes and the English flag. We stopped to take the hand of every caboceer, which, as their household suites occupied several spaces in advance, delayed us long enough to distinctly note some

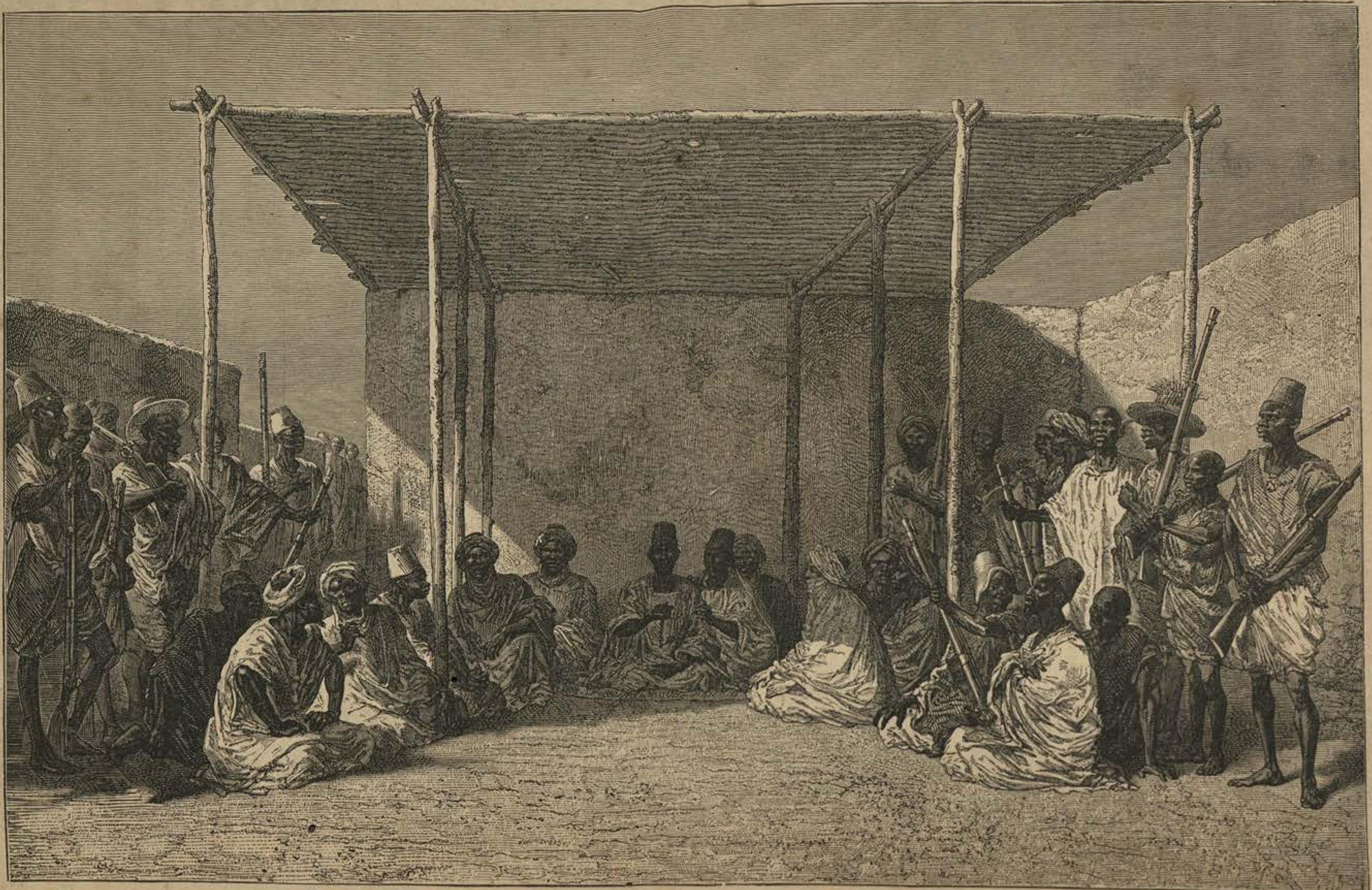


WEST AFRICAN SOLDIER OF THE SENEGAL CORPS.

of the ornaments in the general blaze of splendour and ostentation." Then follows a description of the costly cloths of native manufacture, the extravagantly-priced finery in silks of all the colours of the rainbow, and of an "incredible size and weight, and thrown over the shoulder exactly like the Roman toga," the silk fillets encircling their temples, the many gold necklaces intricately wrought, the expensive Moorish charms, enclosed in small cases of gold, silver, and curious embroidery, the "aggry" beads (of which more anon), the bands of gold and beads encircling the knees of the nobles, and from strings of gold hung the guinea-shaped ornaments of gold casts of animals and rings, strung round their ankles, the sandles of green, red, and delicate white leather in which their feet were encased, and the "manillas, and rude lumps of rock gold, hung from their left wrists, which were so heavily laden as to be supported on the head of one of the handsomest boys." Good Mr. Bowdich, had any doubt been possible to be entertained of his veracity, for from other sources his descriptions have been confirmed, would seem to be desirous of putting his pet kingdom into rivalry with some of the gorgeous states of Hindostan, in reference to which the heads of people were in those days getting turned. Gold and silver met the eye everywhere. "Wolves' [?] and rams' heads as large as life, cast in gold, were suspended from their gold-handled swords, which were held round them in great numbers; the blades were shaped like round bills, and rusted in blood; the sheaths were of leopards' skin, or the shell of a fish-like shagreen. The large drums, supported on the head of one man, and beaten by two others, were braced around with the thigh bones of their enemies, and ornamented with their skulls. The kettle-drums, resting on the ground, were scraped with wet fingers and covered with leopards' skins. The wrists of the drummers were hung with bells and curiously-shaped pieces of iron, which jingled loudly as they were beating. The smaller drums were suspended from the neck by scarves of red cloth; the horns (the teeth of young elephants) were ornamented at the mouth-piece with gold and the jaw-bones of human victims. The war caps of eagles' feathers nodded in the rear, and the large fans of the wing feathers of the ostrich played around the dignitaries. Immediately behind their chairs (which were of a black wood, almost covered by inlays of ivory and gold embossment) stood their handsomest youths, with corslets of leopards' skins, covered with gold cockle-shells, and stuck full of small knives, sheathed in gold and silver, and the handles of blue agate; cartouch boxes of elephants' hide hung below, ornamented in the same manner; a large gold-handled sword was fixed behind the left shoulder, and silk scarves and horse-tails (generally white) streamed from the arms and waist-cloth; their long Danish muskets had rims of gold at small distances, and the stocks were ornamented with shells. Finely-grown girls stood behind the chairs of some, with silver basins. Their stools (of the most laborious carved work, and generally with two large bells attached to them) were conspicuously placed on the heads of favourites; and crowds of small boys were seated around flourishing elephants' tails curiously mounted. The warriors sat on the ground close to these, and so thickly as not to admit of our passing without treading on their feet, to which they were perfectly indifferent; their caps were of the skin of the panjolin and leopard, the tails hanging down behind; their cartouch belts (composed of small gourds which hold the charges, and covered with leopards' or pigs' skins) were embossed with red shells, and small brass bells hung to them; on their hips and shoulders was a cluster of knives; iron chains and collars dignified the most daring, who were prouder of them than gold; their muskets had rests affixed of leopards' skins, and the locks a covering of the same; the sides of their faces were curiously painted in long white streaks, and their arms also striped, having the appearance of armour." Then followed a pageant supplied by the Moors, who, in those days, had a colony in Coomassie, as indeed they had until very recent times. They were traders, and a quarter of the town was assigned to them. Jewels and precious stones, silks and embroidery, figured in this description in equal profusion. They appear to have been the only people who, on that joyous day, showed any ill feeling to the white-faced ambassadors, for Mr. Bowdich notes, "that they slowly raised their eyes from the ground as we passed, with a most malignant scowl." The Pagans were apparently more tolerant of the "infidel" than the semi-civilised Mohammedan, religious intolerance being seemingly an attribute of the higher stages of man's culture. In all Mr. Bowdich's pages, we perfectly revel in a heap of "gold horns," massive silver plate, "punch-bowls, waiters, coffee-pots, tankards, and a very large vessel with heavy handles and clawed feet, which seems to have been made to hold incense." These vessels seem to have been of Portuguese manufacture. The executioner, being a man of rank, had a massive gold plate on his breast, and the executioner's stool or block "was held before him, clotted in blood, and partly covered with a caul of fat." The king's four interpreters were distinguished by wands of office, made of gold, "elevated in all directions, tied in bundles like fasces." The keeper of the royal treasures displayed the insignia of his office, the blow-pan boxes, scales and weights, all of solid gold. If Sydney Smith, in reviewing Mr. Bowdich's book, felt justified in comparing the scene depicted in the preceding pages to a chapter from the Arabian Nights' Entertainment, the picture he gives us of the Ashanti monarch of those days is grander than anything the Caliph Haroun Alraschid could dream of. "His manners were majestic, yet courteous; and he did not allow his surprise to beguile him for a moment of the composure of the monarch. He appeared to be about thirty-eight years of age, inclined to corpulence, and of a benevolent countenance: he wore a fillet of aggry beads round his temple, a necklace of gold cockspur shells strung by their largest ends, and over his right shoulder a red silk cord suspending three saphies cased in gold; his bracelets were the richest mixture of beads and gold, and his fingers were covered with rings; his cloth was of a dark green silk; a pointed diadem was elegantly painted in white on his forehead, also a pattern resembling an epaulette on each shoulder, and an ornament like a full-blown rose, one leaf rising above another until it covered his whole breast; his knee-bands were of aggry beads, and his ankle-strings of gold ornaments of the most delicate workmanship; small drums, sloots, swords, guns, and birds clustered together; his sandals, of a soft white leather, were embossed across the instep-band with small gold and silver cases of saphies; he was seated in a low chair, richly ornamented with gold; he wore a pair of gold castanets on his finger and thumb, which he clapped to enforce silence. The belts of the guards behind his chair were cased in gold, and covered with small jaw-bones of the same metal; the elephants' tails, waving like a small cloud before him, were spangled with gold, and large plumes of feathers were flourished amid them. His eunuch presided over these attendants, wearing only one massive piece of gold about his neck; the royal stool, entirely cased in gold, was displayed under a splendid umbrella, with drums, sankos, horns, and various musical instruments, cased in gold, about the thickness of cartridge paper; large circles of gold hung by scarlet cloth from the swords of state, the sheaths as well as the handles of which were also cased; hatchets of the same were intermixed with them; the breasts of the Ocrahs and various attendants were adorned with large stars, sloots, crescents, and gossamer-wings of solid gold." We will not follow our authority in his description of the reception, nor even of the "aunts, sisters, and others of the royal family, with rows of fine gold chains around their necks." His description of a dinner in the royal palace may suffice, and those who entered Coomassie on the 7th of February, 1874, might, if they chose, contrast it with the dinnerless reception they met when they visited that city as uninvited guests, in these degenerate times:—"We had been taught to prepare for a surprise, but it was exceeded. We were conducted to the eastern side of the croom village to a door of green reeds, which excluded the crowd, and admitted us through a short avenue to the king's garden, an area equal to one of the large squares in London. The breezes were strong and constant. In the centre, four large umbrellas of new scarlet cloth were fixed, under which was the king's dining table (heightened for the occasion), and covered in the most imposing manner; his massive plate was well disposed, and silver forks, knives, and spoons were plentifully laid. The large silver waiter supported a roasted pig in the centre; the other dishes on the table were roasted ducks, fowls, stews, peas-pudding, &c. &c. On the ground on one side of the table were various soups, and every sort of vegetable; and elevated parallel with the other side were oranges, pines, and other fruits; sugar-candy, Port and Madeira wines, spirits and Dutch cordials, with glasses. Before we sat down the king met us, and said, that as we had come to see him, we must receive the following present from his hands: two ounces four ackies of gold, one sheep and one large hog to the officers, ten ackies to the linguists, and five akies to our servants. We never saw a dinner more handsomely served, and never ate a better. On our expressing our relish, the king sent for his cooks, and

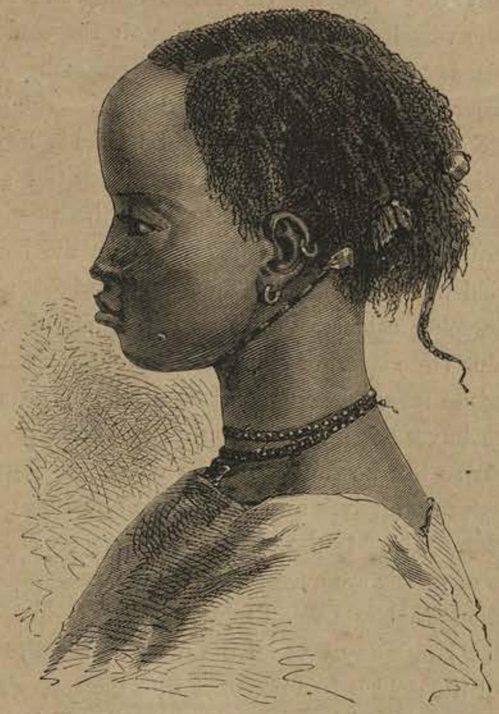


WOMAN OF MACINA.



A "PALAVER" IN NORTH-WEST AFRICA.

gave them ten ackies. The king and a few of his captains sat at a distance, but he visited us constantly, and seemed quite proud of the scene; he conversed freely, and expressed much satisfaction at our toasts, 'The King of Ashanti, the King of England, the Governor, the King's captains, a perpetual union (with a speech, which is the *sine qua non*), and the handsome women of England and Ashanti.' After dinner the king made many inquiries about England, and retired, as we did, that our servants might clear the table, which he insisted on. When he returned, some of the wine and Dutch cordials remaining, he gave them to our servants to take with them, and ordered the tablecloth to be thrown to them and all the napkins. A cold pig, cold fowls (with six that had not been dressed), were despatched to Coomassie for our supper."


ASHANTI GIRL.

We have drawn heavily on Mr. Bowdich, but really if we refrained we would have nobody to give us any information at all. The English treasury tells but a doleful tale of gold or silver either, and those whose imaginations, excited by this description of the young *attaché* to the African Company's embassy, had hoped to have partaken of "roasted ducks" or "peas-pudding," fared something after the manner of those forlorn souls whom proverbial philosophy has assigned to dine with Duke Humphrey! True, they captured a case or two of gin, which, after being solemnly pronounced by a "commission of surgeons" to be good Hollands, were confiscated for the comfort of the thirsty victors; but Port, Madeira, or any other Dutch cordials —except the Schiedam aforesaid—our gallant troops neither saw nor smelt. We must remember, no doubt, that in Bowdich's day the slave trade was flourishing, and that gold which could then stay at home to figure in the barbarous pageants such as we have described, has in later times been forced to reach the coast to supply the luxuries which long custom has rendered necessaries. Still the gold mines are productive to this day, and during the time Sir Garnet Wolseley was delayed by the deceitful messages of the king and the laziness of his train of porters, in the days before the capture of Coomassie, much of "loot" prospective was carried back into the bush, or concealed in localities where it would not be likely to fall into the hands of our soldiers. The Ashanti method of extracting the gold from the auriferous soil is very primitive. A quantity of the earth, sand, and gravel through which the scales and little bits of gold are scattered, is dug up by means of a hoe, and washed in a calabash by a sharp rotary movement, which gradually tosses off the earth and sand, and allows the heavier gold to remain at the bottom of the vessel. It is, in fact, exactly the same method of washing gold as that known in California as "panning out"—a plan only adopted in that country for the purpose of testing the richness of a "placer" or gold deposit. The gold saved by this method of washing is then put into quills for safe keeping. So thickly impregnated is the soil with gold that even by this rude mode of extracting great quantities are obtained. After every shower of rain the streams carry down sand laden with the precious metal, which on their subsiding is found mixed up with the alluvium left behind on the banks. With the improved appliances now used in gold-washing immense quantities might no doubt be obtained; an experienced Ashanti gold-washer calculates that in the course of a year he will obtain about twenty "minkali"—in value two slaves, or about £16 2s. 6d. Gold-buying on the west coast of Africa is not a trade that an inexperienced hand need take up. The weights are black seeds called "telekessi," and each buyer has his own weights and scales,—when it is a pitched battle between seller and purchaser as to who can cheat the other. "Bogus dust" is manufactured by preparing nuggets of copper and silver mixed, and the fine dust gold is simulated by copper filings and red coral powder. The "telekessi" weights are soaked in butter to make them heavier, and imitation ones of pebble are even put in their place.

Mr. Skertchley* mentions that in a small factory on the Gold Coast he has seen as much as 300 ounces of gold taken in a single day. At all the factories there are professed "gold-takers," whose duty it is to assay all the gold before it passes into the trader's hand, so as to detect and reject the "Brummagen nuggets" which are continually offered them. "A half-naked savage will arrive in the factory with gold-dust to exchange for guns, powder, or cloth. The dust is carefully tied up in small pieces of paper in one corner of his waist-cloth, or often enough concealed in the intricate mazes of his wool. The small packet is opened, and the gold-taker empties it into a copper blow-pan, shaped like a banker's shovel without a handle, and with a dexterous movement of the wrist separates the large from the small particles. With a feather-tip he then picks out all the suspicious particles and bits of dust, and with a wonderfully-regulated puff blows off the specs of mica and pyrites which would otherwise have escaped unnoticed. The blown gold is then weighed and handed over to the trader. The wages of a good gold-taker are very high, and some over-acute, but penny-wise and pound-foolish persons who have dispensed with the services of these gold-takers, and have relied upon the efficiency of aquafortis and touchstone, have found, on conveying the gold-dust (?) to England, that they have been buying silver-gilt, or even gold-dust made in Birmingham itself."

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* "Dahomey as it is" (1874), p. 512.

They will allow no white man to interfere with their so-called "gold-mines." When the Creator first made the world he created a black man and a white man. To the black man he offered a calabash of gold, rich soil, a doum hut, and all the fruits of the earth in abundance; but the white man preferred a quantity of paper, pens and ink, and having got knowledge they prospered over the black man, who in his ignorance preferred the apparent natural riches. But having made their choice, they say, they intend sticking to it; let the white man keep to his ink and paper.

A license is exacted from every one in the kingdom of Ashanti wearing gold ornaments. Strictly speaking, all the gold found belongs to the king; and when a nobleman or other rich man dies all the gold which he may leave behind him becomes his Majesty's property. Moreover, it is forbidden for any one but the king's servants to sweep the market-place at Coomassie —in case among the sweepings may be found some particles of dust which have been dropped in the course of barter—gold-dust being the ordinary commerce of the country. When the king dies, his treasures are buried with him in the Bantama, or sepulchre of the Ashanti monarchs; and no doubt, had Sir Garnet Wolseley, as was originally his intention to have done, destroyed this sacred enclosure—and, in spite of much that has been urged to the contrary, those best qualified to judge consider that he ought to have done so at all risks—much of the treasure, the absence of which so disappointed our soldiers, would have been found. "Aggry beads" are ornaments also highly prized by the Ashanti. Their origin is rather obscure, and though the artists of Birmingham have attempted to imitate them, they have hitherto failed to produce a sham which will impose upon the art connoisseurs of the Gold Coast. It is probable that they are glass mosaics, and are of Egyptian or Phœnician manufacture. The Egyptians or Phœnicians might have sold their goods to the Berbers, and by them the aggry beads, among other manufactures of these ingenious dwellers in Tyre or on the Nile banks, might have been passed from tribe to tribe until they reached far away Ashanti. It is an Ashanti law that if an aggry bead is broken in a scuffle, seven slaves must be paid to the owner—or in other words, upwards of £47! They are usually found at some distance from the sea, and though only picked up now and then by accident, are yet plentiful, proving that during the times these beads reached the Ashantis the trade of the Gold Coast must have been flourishing.*

The *caboceers*, a name which has more than once occurred in the preceding pages, are powerful nobles or captains, whose attendants carry huge and gaily-decorated umbrellas, or rather stalked canopies over their heads, as insignia of their rank. When in the presence of the king they sit on stools, a privilege accorded to none other of woman born. "These men," writes Mr. Winwood Reade, "would be surrounded by their household suites, like the feudal lords of ancient days; their garments of costly foreign silks unravelled and weaved anew into elaborate patterns, and thrown over the shoulder like the Roman toga, leaving the right arm bare; a silk fillet encircling the temples; Moorish charms enclosed in small cases of gold and silver, suspended on their breasts, with necklaces made of aggry beads, a peculiar stone found in the country, and resembling the 'gleinndys' of the ancient Britons; lumps of gold hanging from their wrists; while handsome girls would stand behind, holding silver basins in their hands"—all after the Bowdichian description of Ashanti magnificence. The loss of their umbrellas in battle, or on any such occasion, is accounted an eternal disgrace to the former owners, and is looked upon in much the same light as a regiment allowing its colours to fall into the hands of the enemy. In addition to the umbrella, each chief is attended by his physician, whose whole pharmacopœia is contained in a leather bag slung over his shoulder—and an executioner, whose face is usually whitened, and his head covered by a cap of monkey skin—the animal's head being in front. Sword-bearers and shield-bearers also accompany these Ashanti captains, and the weapons are almost as magnificent as the individuals they are intended to do honour to, all—umbrellas, swords, and stools—being inlaid, and elaborately decorated with gold to an extent which savours of Eastern prodigality. In passing it may be mentioned that in some pictures—which must be entirely founded on the artist's imagination—the caboceers are represented on horseback dashing along at full speed, surrounded by their wild followers. Now, unfortunately for the truth of this picture (?), there are no horses in Ashanti, these animals being unable to live for any length of time on the Gold Coast. Apparently the sketch has been founded on some vague literary recollections of Dahomey, where, indeed, there are a few horses; but so far from the caboceers of that country indulging in equitation, when they venture to mount these animals a follower walks on either side of him, to enable the horseman to keep his balance, while proceeding at the slowest possible pace.

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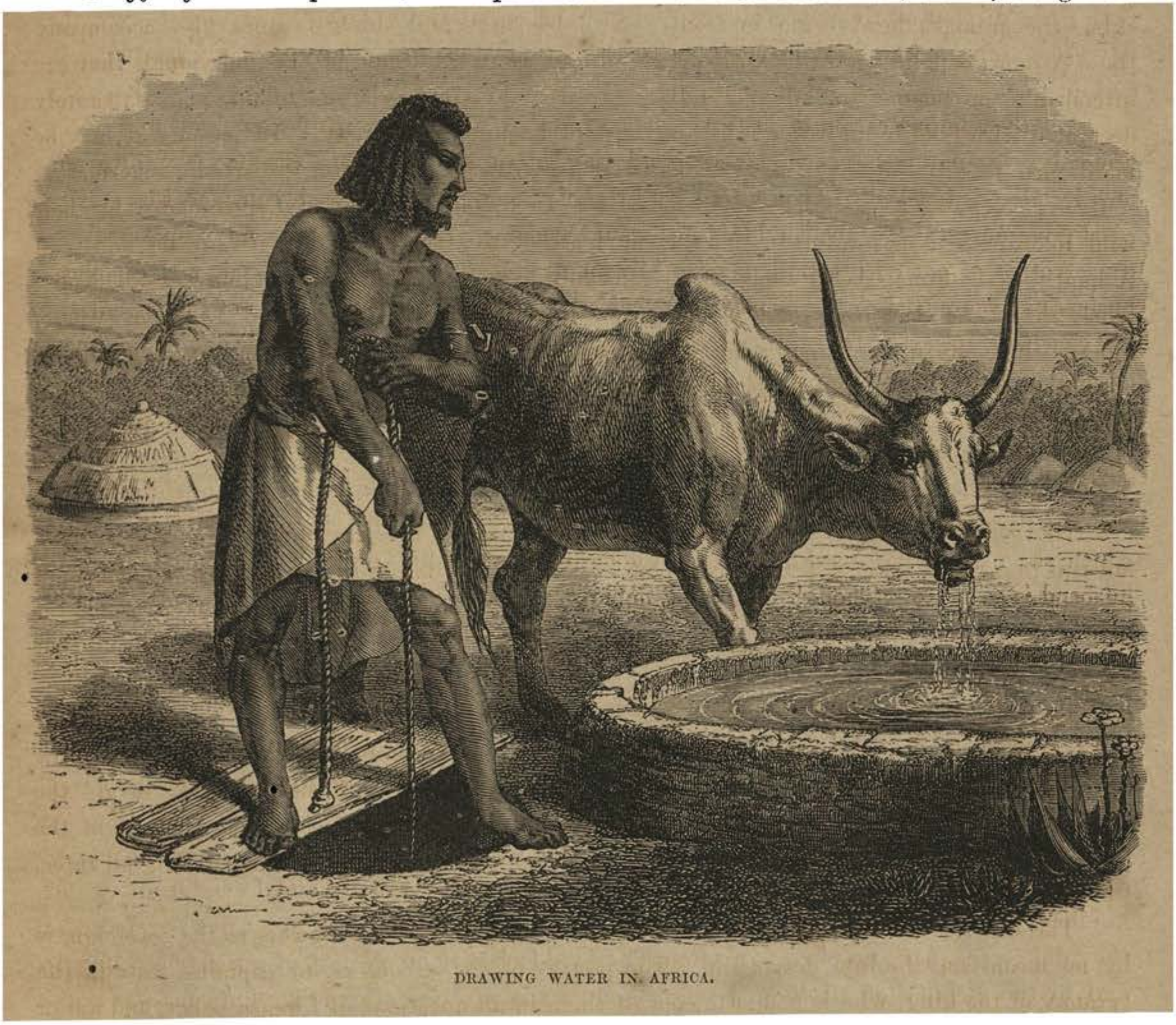
* Winwood Reade's "Ashanti Campaign," p. 10.

GOVERNMENT.

The *government* is, of course, monarchical, and almost absolute, but the succession does not run in a direct line—a feature common in African polity—but to a brother or nephew, in which latter case the nephew is not the son of the king's brother, but of his sister—who (and it is a strange commentary on savage morals) need not be married, the only requisite being that the putative father be strong, good-looking, and of reputable origin or rank. The reason they give for this departure from the direct line in the succession to the Ashanti crown is that one can never be sure that the king is the father of the queen's sons, and that as, moreover, the queens are almost invariably of humble origin, making the son of the "princess royal" the heir secures that at least there should be some of the kingly blood in the occupant of the throne. Failing the brother or the nephew, the son can occupy the throne; failing all three, the chief slave.

The constitution of Ashanti, though allowing very sumptuary powers to the sovereign, is by no means an absolute despotism. The powers of the caboceers, or captains, restrain the tyranny of the king, who is bound to consult them in all questions of foreign policy, and war or peace. He also voluntarily, in times of trouble, summons to his aid a few chosen councillors, whose advice he listens to, or the contrary, as seems good to him. His civil list is great; tribute is paid by the vassal princes, taxes are levied on all the villages or "crooms," while tolls and custom-dues make up the rest of the revenue. He has also in his own hands various gold-mines, and levies a handsome percentage on all the gold found in his country, to which, indeed, he makes a formal claim, not, however, except in rare cases, enforced. All nuggets are, however, strictly escheated to the king. Where every man is a soldier, and the king is dependent on the goodwill of his subjects—warlike though they be—before he can carry out any of his ambitious schemes, he is not very apt to unnecessarily irritate them. From this point of view there is a good deal to be said in favour of a feudal monarchy, such as Ashanti is; yet between the highest nobles and the king there is a wide gulf; as in Dahomey the prime minister, or even greatest general, will humble himself in the dust when entering the dread presence of royalty.

Polygamy is both permitted and practised to the fullest extent in Ashanti, though the number of wives in the king's harem is limited. True—as the mystic number to which he is restricted is 3,333—his majesty has no reason to complain of this despotic restriction on his matrimonial propensities! They are selected from all classes, but there are not in Ashanti, as in Dahomey, any Amazonian or female soldiers. As in Dahomey—the customs of which country agree in many particulars with those of Ashanti—when a man meets any of the king's wives he must turn away his eyes and fall on the ground. Among the court attendants are buffoons or jesters, a body-guard called "Ochras," whose lives end with that of the king, being killed in order to escort him to his fathers in the Ashanti land of bliss; and a troop of mischievous



DRAWING WATER IN AFRICA.

young pages. The royal executioners, bearing immense gold-hilted knives, walk in the king's train, and are men of high rank and consideration. One of these officials carries the death-drum, which is beat when an execution is about to proceed, and is decorated with human bones, hair, and skin ; the death-block, plated with gold, and on which is sprinkled a little of the blood of every one of the innumerable victims, until, when it was last seen, this disgusting piece of savage cruelty was so clotted with human gore as to render its form almost unrecognisable. "Blood and gold are this king's delight; his people are freely allowed the sight of both; the display of their profuse expenditure is essential to Ashanti royalty." We shall have something more to say about this characteristic feature so bound up with Ashanti religion and justice.

Yet the administration of justice—justice from an African point of view, we must always remember—is not bad, notwithstanding all the barbarous pomp and cruelty, which we must also recollect is not looked upon as cruelty by the people, and is, indeed, considered essential to good government. To abolish bloodshed would endanger the crown—for no people are more conservative of old customs than your African grandee. All civil, judicial, and diplomatic business is committed to the hands of a set of men skilful in that plenitude of talk essential to the conclusion of every bargain, or the settlement of every affair of life public or private, known as "palaver."* (See Engraving.) Milder offences are expiated by a fine, and if a man slays his inferior in rank, he must recompense the relatives of the person whom he has killed; but if one of his equals is killed, then the murderer must wipe out his crime by killing himself. Though no penalty is attached to killing his slaves, yet if a man kills his wife or children, then he must pay a recompense to the wife's relatives. When a man marries a woman, any property which she may be possessed of does not by right belong to him; the property of the wife and husband is separate. Though a man of noble or caboceer rank may sell his wife to another man, yet the crime of adultery is rare, and is severely punished when detected. No woman can, however, be sold against her will; if her husband resolves to do so her relatives can redeem her by paying over to him the price which he originally paid for her. She is further at liberty, should her husband afterwards be convicted of adultery, to resume her maiden name. Slavery exists, but a slave can regain his freedom if he is persistently ill-used. Indeed, all over the Gold Coast slavery is the mildest of its kin. Among the Ashantis much the same customs as among the Fantis prevail in reference to slavery. Domestic slavery among the latter people is, for instance, a term applied to those slaves born and brought up in their families. They get so attached to the family that they do not care to escape, and, indeed, if they did escape, have no place to go to. They are looked upon as part of a rich man's family, and in the vicinity of all these people's houses are a series of smaller huts for the slaves. Indeed, many a Fanti millionaire (!) would gladly get quit of his rather numerous servile dependents. If a man dies without heirs, then the domestic slaves will frequently inherit the property. They, however, buy, and the Ashantis sell under the walls of Cape Coast Castle, slaves captured in war, a system that ought to be abolished, now that we have resolved, without consulting the natives—a trifling piece of courtesy that obtains no place in English colonial policy—to turn the Fanti territory into a colony instead of a protectorate.

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* From the Portuguese "palabra," just as *dash*, a present, is from "dás-me," give me; *piccaniny*, child, from *picania*; *caboceer*, a captain, and so on.

Theft is punished by restoration of the stolen property, added to an extortionate rate of interest, calculated from the time it was first "annexed" until it was restored. An insolvent debtor is liable, along with his wives, children, and slaves to be forfeited as slaves to the creditor, though this law is not always carried to its extremity. The present King of Ashanti, is, as nearly everybody knows familiarly, Koffee Kai, or Koffee Kerrikerri, as others declare is his name, while most commonly it is given as Koffee Calcalli. I suspect all are misnomers alike, and that the real name of the monarch is *Quofie Osai*, the last being a kingly patronymic, and the first a common name of his line. Be that as it may, we have all heard quite enough about him, and his supposed portrait has appeared in a score of caricatures. In reality he is said to be little negro-like, except in the darkness of his skin and in his woolly hair, and is a fine-looking and rather dignified character; in appearance every inch a king, quite capable of disputing with us, as was the original cause of the last quarrel, his right to Elmina on the Coast, where, to use his own language, "I eat my salt and drink my rum." In ferocity he is the equal, if not the superior of Gelele, the King of Dahomey, to whom we shall shortly introduce the reader, and to whom Mr. Skertchley has lately attempted to apply the white-washing process. Their "customs" will be presently referred to. The king, in addition, celebrates his birthday every seventh year, with a more than the ordinary spilling of blood, and the death of every chief is an excuse for slaughter. Though limited as to his authority over the higher classes, his disposition over his poorer subjects is practically unlimited. He is the chief trader in the country; the gold mines are neglected, and the Coomassie people are afraid to raise live stock in case the king, in pursuance of his license to rob, should seize it.

Like all African countries, the boundaries of Ashanti are rather vaguely defined; but it has been calculated that the inhabitants number at least 1,000,000 souls, and as every man is a soldier, the army will be about 300,000. They are chiefly armed with flint-lock muskets, but have also Enfield rifles, but, as yet, no artillery—the wooded character of most of the country, and the entire want of decent roads, preventing the use of anything which would require wheeled carriages.

Coomassie (or *Kumasi*, as some purists would write it), the capital, was a prosperous town, well suited for the seat of a barbarous monarch, being, from its situation, naturally fortified. "Its population," writes Mr. Austin,* "was formerly estimated at 70,000; but 20,000 or 30,000 seems to have been nearer to the truth. Its site was upon the slope of a rising piece of rocky ground, not at all steep, almost surrounded by a marsh, with ditches, large ponds, and streams of varying breadth and depth. The town was built in the form of an oblong nearly four miles in circuit, and was not fortified by walls, except on the side where stood the royal palace. There were several open streets regularly laid out, and fifty to a hundred yards wide, and several open squares and market places. Trees were planted for shade in some parts of the city, and there were circular stone platforms, raised two steps, for the king or his official representatives to overlook an assemblage of the people. Moorish pedlars from North Africa, and native merchants from the Gold Coast brought a variety of foreign manufactures for sale. The artisans of this town, and of the other Ashanti towns, goldsmiths, cutlers, weavers and dyers of cloth, tanners of leather, embroiderers, carpenters, and potters used to exhibit their handiwork. The rustic cultivators produced their corn and fruit, their yams, plantains, groundnuts, and poultry; the herdsmen, their beef, mutton, veal, and pork; the hunters, their venison and other wild animal flesh; the brewers, their palm wine. It was a scene of prosperous industry and plenty." The King's palace, before its destruction by our forces in 1874, consisted of several court-yards, each surrounded with alcoves and verandahs, and having two gates or doors, so that each yard was a thoroughfare. In lieu of locks, the doors were secured by padlocks. Apparently, the importance of a house is judged by its doors, and while a superior house has only three or four, the king's palace has ten or twelve. The part of the palace facing the street, Mr. Reade describes, as Moorish in aspect, in the style of the houses at Cape Coast Castle, with a flat roof and parapet, and suites of apartments on the first floor. It was designed and built by Fanti masons many years ago. The rooms upstairs, when inspected after the King's flight, were perfectly littered with all sorts of things useful and useless to the King. Among other things were books in many languages, Bohemian glass, clocks, silver plate, old furniture, Persian rugs, Kidderminster carpets, pictures and engravings, numberless chests and coffers, a sword bearing the inscription "*From Queen Victoria to the King of Ashantee,*" a copy of the *Times,* October 17th, 1843. With these were many specimens of Moorish and Ashanti handicraft, gold-studded sandals, such as only the King and a few great chiefs may wear, with, strange to say, Arabic writing on the soles; leopard skin caps lined with yellow velvet, and adorned outside with beaten gold like that of Cashmere, and a plume of the same precious metal; saddles of red leather, magnificent canopies or state umbrellas of velvet and satin, baskets or cradles in which Ashantee chiefs are accustomed to be carried on the heads of slaves with, and the curious and tasteful things too numerous for me to describe or even catalogue. No wonder Mr. Reade's Borneo servant was not seriously impressed with the palace of Koffee, and thought that he was more of a king than that, and remarked "that if his master went into the palace of Kukawa, in Borneo, ah! there he should see what a king was like." No doubt he was right that the Mohammedan kings of the Niger region have a good deal of the barbaric magnificence of their co-religionists, the Eastern potentates.

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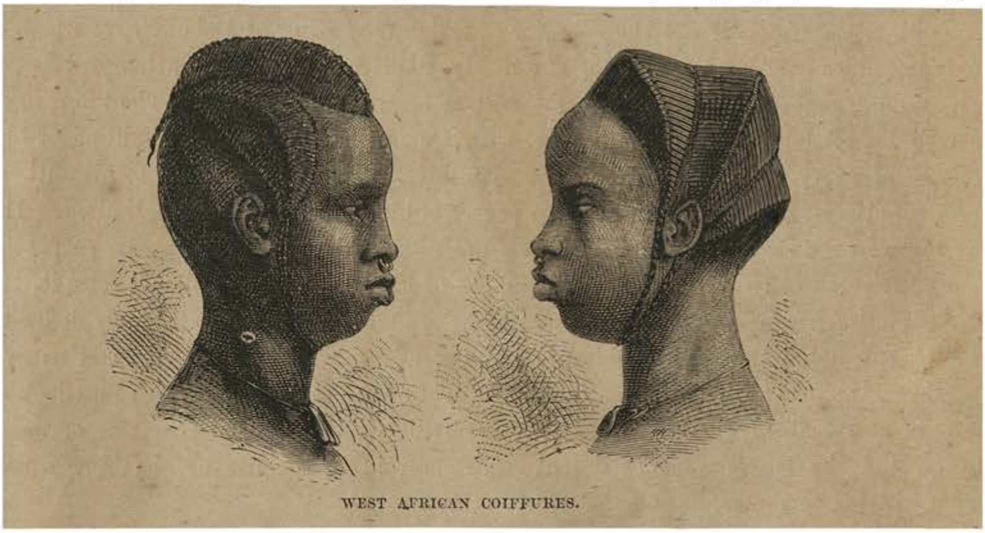
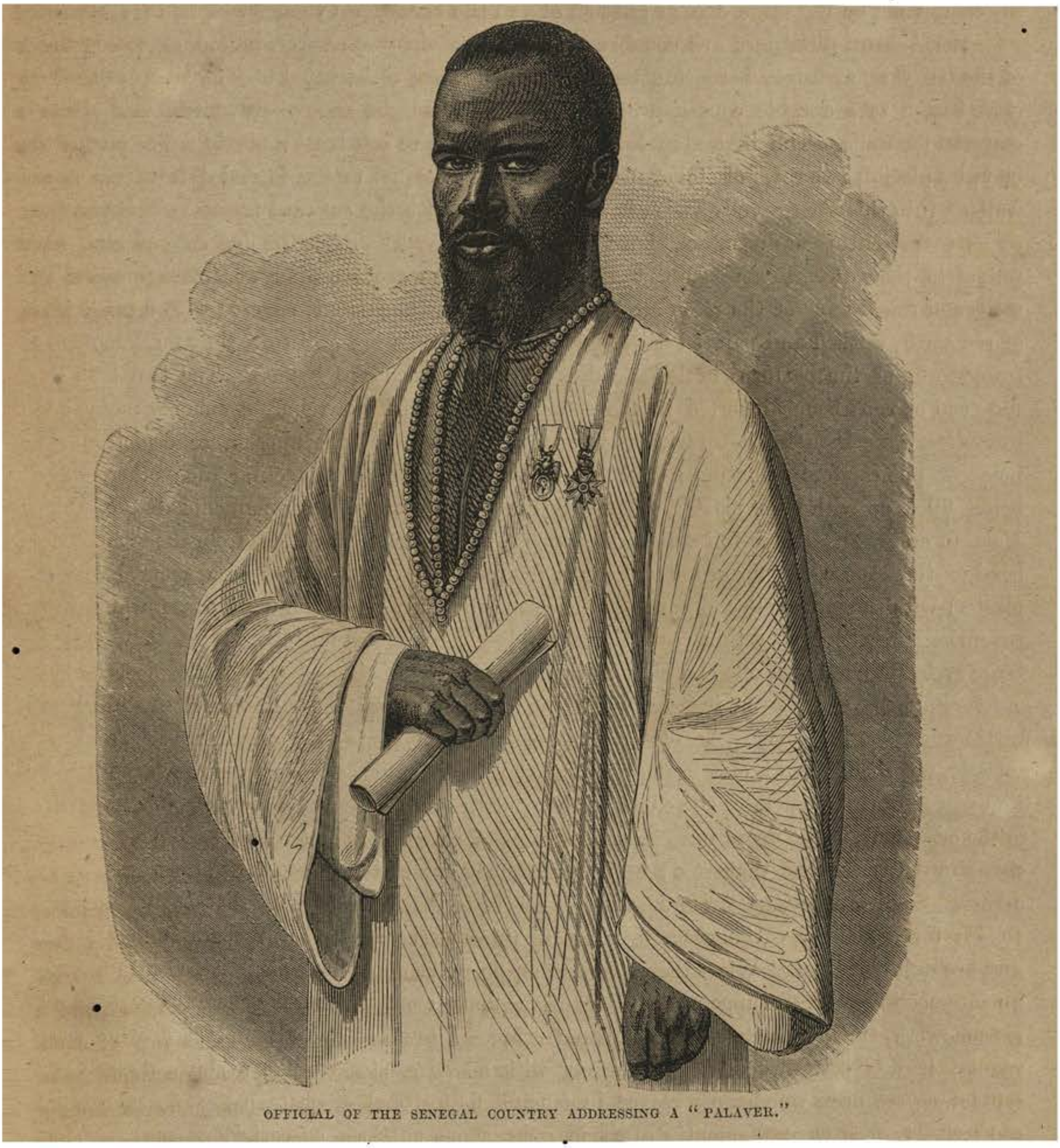
* *Illustrated London News*, 1874.



WEST AFRICAN COIFFURES.

For two hundred years Coomassie had existed—Ashanti imagery said from the beginning of the world—and it was deemed impregnable. No white man had ever approached it on a hostile mission, and the task, if even it was deemed possible, was hardly thought expedient to attempt. But it was attempted, and one day early in February, 1874, *Coomassie fuit!* All sort of potents, according to Ashanti tale, heralded the fall of what to them was the centre of the world they lived in, the London, the Paris, the Pekin of the Gold Coast. Stones fell from heaven, and a child was born which spoke from its birth; "suddenly it disappeared, and the room was filled with bush." Be this as it may—and we will not disturb the mane of the tale—the old


OFFICIAL OF THE SENEGAL COUNTRY ADDRESSING A "PALAVER."

fetish tree from which the town takes its name fell down and was shattered to pieces. So awe-struck were the people that no one dared to touch the pieces which lay scattered on the street. The last rumour which has reached this country is that the king proposes to rebuild his city, if not on the same site, at least on one in the immediate vicinity.

The Ashanti dwellings are comfortable erections—in this respect, indeed, exceeding those of the tribes immediately bordering the Coast. They are constructed of "swish" or plastered clay, beaten to a durable consistence, so that it forms a light and, when whitewashed, durable material for walls. The first step in house-building is to construct a mould for receiving the clay, by placing two rows of stakes placed at a distance equal to the intended thickness of the walls. Into this the gravelly swish is placed, which, with the outward framework, is plastered so as to present the appearance of a thick mud wall. The caboceers and men of rank have pillars in their dwellings to support the roof, and form a proscenium or "open front." The steps and raised roofs of the room are constructed of clay and stone, covered with a thick layer of red earth, washed and painted daily. "While the walls are still soft, they form moulds or frameworks of the patterns in delicate slips of cane, connected by grass. The two first slips (one end of each being inserted in the soft wall) projected the relief, commonly mezzo; the interstices were then filled up with the plaster, and assumed the appearance depicted. The poles or pillars were sometimes encircled by twists of cane, intersecting each other, which, being filled up with thin plaster, resembled the lozenge and cable ornaments of the Anglo-Norman order; the quatre-foil was very common, and by no means rude, from the symmetrical bend of the cane which formed it. I saw a few pillars (after they had been squared with the plaster) with numerous slips of cane pressed perpendicularly on to the wet surface, which being covered again with a very thin coat of plaster, closely resembled fluting. When they formed a large arch, they inserted one end of a thick piece of cane in the wet clay of the floor or base, and bending the other over, inserted it in the same manner; the entablature was filled with wattle-work plastered over. Arcades and piazzas were common. A whitewash, very frequently renewed, was made from a clay in the neighbourhood. Of course the plastering is very frail, and the relief frequently discloses the edges of the cane, giving, however, a piquant effect, auxiliary to the ornament. The doors were an entire piece of cottonwood, cut with great labour, of the stems or buttresses of that tree; battens, variously cut and painted, were afterwards nailed across. So disproportionate was the price of labour to that of provisions, that I gave but two tokoos for a slab of cottonwood, five feet by three. The locks they use are from Houssa, and are quite original. When they raised a first floor, the upper room was divided into two by an intersecting wall, to support the rafters of the upper room, which was generally covered with a framework, thickly plastered over with red ochre. I saw but one attempt at flooring with plank; it was cottonwood shaped entirely with an adze, stocked like a ship's deck. The windows were open wood-work, carved in fanciful figures and intricate patterns, and painted red; the frames were frequently cased in gold, about as thick as cartridge paper. What surprised me most, and is not the least of the many circumstances deciding their great superiority over the generality of Negroes, was the discovery that every house had its cloacæ, besides the common ones for the lower orders without the town."* Every morning the rubbish and offal thrown out from the houses are burnt at the back of the street, and in their domestic arrangements, as well as their persons, they are very cleanly. The furniture and other utensils, though cleanly, are yet greatly superior to those in use among more savage tribes.

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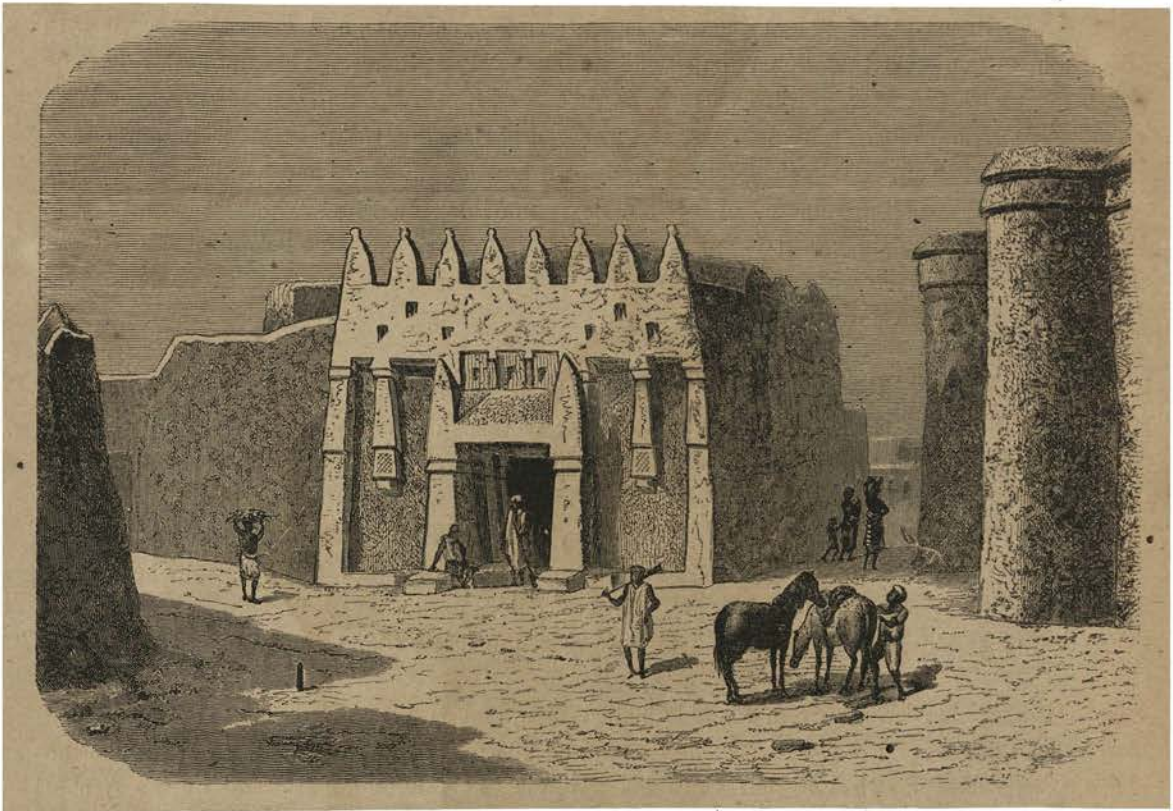
* **Bowdich's "Ashanti," &c., p. 306.**

Their dress consists of a tunic of coloured calico or some other cloth, while for higher occasions, or for the clothes of rich men, silk woven in the native looms is substituted. Ornaments of gold, silver, and "aggry beads" are worn, either as decorations or as charms against illness, witchcraft, or other misfortune. The grandees, when in full uniform, will add "jujus," or breast-plates of gold, and other glittering ornaments, and cover their heads with horned helmets of an extraordinary shape, and waving feather plumes. They frequently decorate their faces with delicately-painted patterns in green or white paint, on the cheeks and forehead. They have several musical instruments, and are fond of dancing, mimicry, story-telling, songs, and all sorts of fun. Each nobleman has his own band of minstrels and heralds, who used to patrol the city at stated hours of certain days, playing the tunes which belong to their respective masters. Feudalism is apt in all countries to have the same belongings, and hence we see in Africa much which will remind the reader of similar scenes in Europe during the sway of the mediæval chivalry.

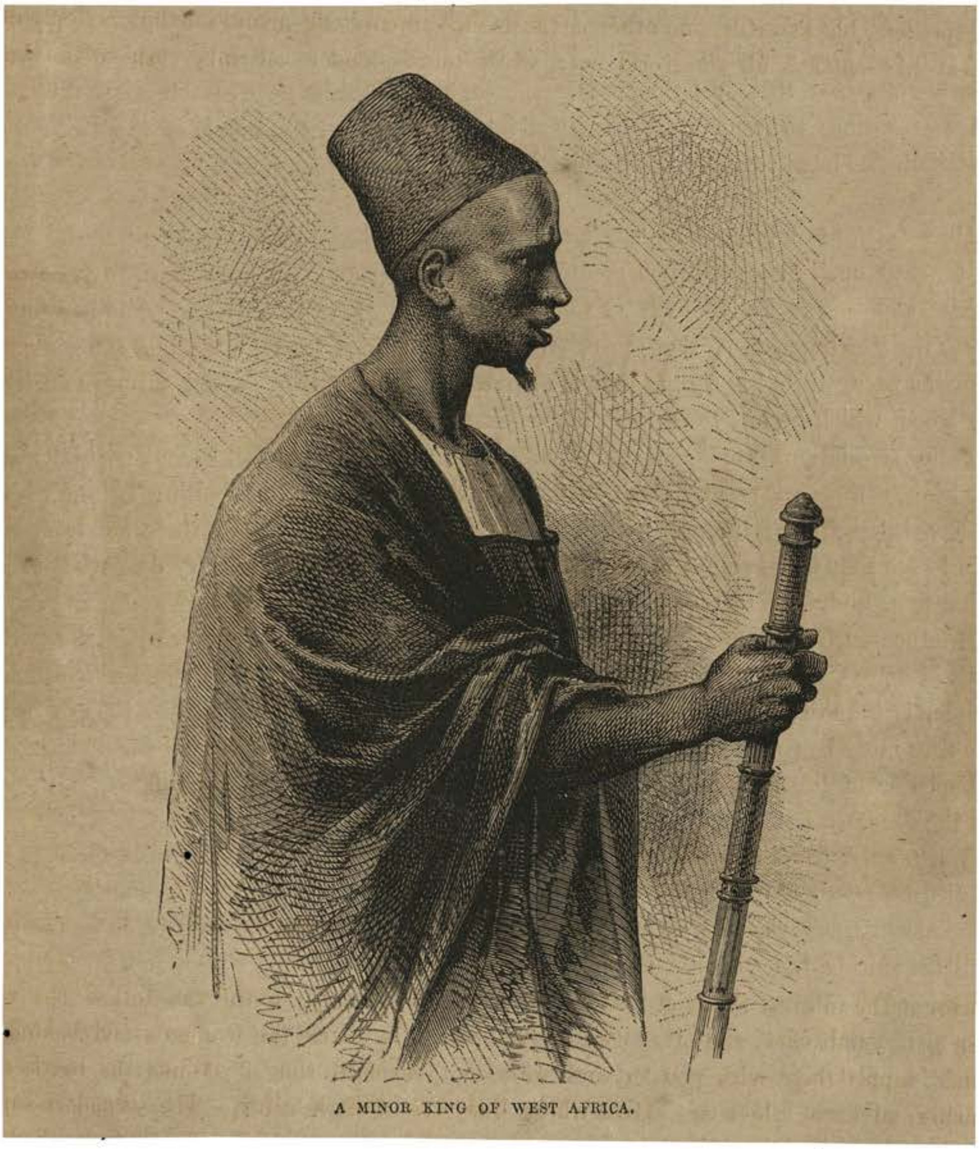
The industries of the Ashantis are limited, but yet interesting. Their looms are formed on the same principle as the English ones are. Their cloths, in fineness, brilliancy, and size, are, when we consider the appliances by which they have been produced, and the innate apathetic laziness of the native African, admirable. They also paint, with great ease and rapidity, white cloths, and excel in pottery and goldsmith's work. Their weights are very neat brass casts of almost every animal, fruit, and vegetable known to them, though the original ones in the shape of seeds, described on page 66, are still occasionally used, and universally so on the Coast for weighing gold. They also do good work in iron, tan leather, and are skilful carpenters.

The army is recruited from all able-bodied men, and is very numerous. Bowdich calculated that there were 150,000 disposable forces, and 204,000 fit to bear arms. The number has been calculated somewhat higher since his day, viz., at 300,000. Looking at the Ashanti army, as compared with the fierce rabbles which go under that name in other portions of Africa, it is almost in a state of discipline. War is made, if not with all the forms, yet with much of the craft and diplomatic duplicity prevalent in more civilized communities. When the Ashanti monarch proposes to invade another tribe or nation, he despatches envoys, laden with rich presents, to the neighbouring powers, appealing on one side to their sense of justice, by pointing out how great has been the provocation, and what a "just and holy war" is the systematic murdering he is about engaging in; and on the other, while assuring them of his friendship and affection, takes care to point out how they can be benefited, if not by helping, at least by not impeding him in his proposed operations. He has generals, if he does not command himself, who are accomplished in all the tactics of savage warfare, ambuscade, flanking attacks, and feigned retreats. The craft of the diplomatists in the council, is equalled by the courage of the troops in the field. Every man knows his place, and as soon as war is declared he accoutres himself with musket and cartouch-box, and provisioning himself for a time with a few kola nuts and a little maize meal, joins the company to which he belongs. The enemy will supply the rest of his commissariat, for, like the Duke of Marlborough, he believes in the principle of quartering himself on the enemy. As soon as the army is on the march, the women, daubing themselves with white clay, or stripping themselves naked, march through the towns, beating the drum and belabouring any wight who might have remained at home.

Carpenters, blacksmiths, and other artisans accompany the army, suttlers sell provisions, and cheat like suttlers all the world over, while money-lenders advance cash to impecunious militaries at the interest of about 120 to 300 per cent. Lastly, in the van follow the women bearing pots, calabashes, and other cooking utensils. In battle the women stand behind their husbands, supply them with powder, and animate them with songs. When the battle closes, skirmishers advance; these are slaves whose lives are of little value. The secondary captains fight in the front ranks, while the great nobles and the king sit behind on stools, shaded by the huge umbrellas which denote their rank. They are like the officers in some of the Spanish-American Republics, who, after the battle has commenced, take to the rear of their troops, and shout valiant commands to them, inculcating in sonorous language how glorious it is to fight, or even, if necessary, to die for one's country, while they at the same time are preparing to falsify their maxim by flight. Hence they are called "encouragers" by the cynical soldiery. In the same manner the Ashanti encouragers remain in the rear, surrounded by young men who


HOUSE AFTER THE AFRICAN-MOORISH STYLE OF ARCHITECTURE.

cut down those who attempt to retreat. "It is," says the Ashanti soldier, "just as well to die fighting, for if we attempt to escape we are killed anyhow." It is said to be the fashion for the commander-in-chief while the battle is raging to sit on his stool playing some kind of musical instrument, as if to impress the bystanders that he was so confident of victory as to be perfectly easy as to the result. In case of defeat, the chiefs and captains are said to commit suicide.



A MINOR KING OF WEST AFRICA.

When the day is lost they seat themselves calmly on casks of gunpowder, and blow themselves up into the air, that the Ashanti proverb may be fulfilled—"It is shame which causes the chief to die." If victorious, they never pursue the enemy when it is near sunset. During the active part of the campaign the army is prohibited all other food except meal, a quantity of which each soldier carries in the bag by his side and mixes with the first water he falls in with. No fires are allowed to be lit; they eat a little bit of the heart of the first enemy slain, and wear ornaments of his teeth and bones. The whole feudal system of Ashanti is favourable to military discipline, and at the same time conducive to fostering the war spirit and the greed of military glory and gain. The nation is a nation of soldiers as well disciplined as a barbarous army can be. To the neighbouring powers they were, until their late reverse, a name of terror. The Fantis considered it useless to oppose them; the very name of "Shanti" was almost sufficient to make them run.* But though the Ashantis could conquer, as Volney said of the Arabs, "they could not govern," and one tribe after another revolted from their rule, and either asserted their pristine independence, or formed a new combination fatal to their conquerors. Since the monarchy sustained its last shock, at the hands of the British, several other tributaries have revolted from under its sway.

How *justice* is administered we have already described; how crime is punished has also been touched on. We need not mention that the log-and-iron—an African version of the English stocks—was as common at Coomassie as elsewhere in Africa. Another form is to manacle the feet together so that the prisoner is not confined to one spot, but can shuffle along at a snail's pace, while his right hand is secured by an iron loop passed through an enormous log of wood, which he has to carry in his arms.

Police regulations are strictly followed out in Coomassie; none, except with the sanction of the king, can go out at night in Coomassie, and policemen—wild-looking beings with heads half-shaved, long hair falling over their foreheads, and with lances in their hands—patrol the streets to see that this tyrannical regulation—apparently a bit of military despotism to prevent the chance of midnight revolts—is carried out in its fulness.

Another curious regulation, which shows that the Ashanti laws are not the portentous growth of mere despotism uncontrolled by the people, or undirected by some sound underlying principle, is that the king must attend all fires. This is a wise provision, though in a town where fires must be common, a severe tax upon such a luxurious monarch; for under the eye of the dispenser of life and death the active firemen will not be apt to be dilatory in their duties when the fire-horn is blown.

When an Ashanti dies his body is buried, and along with it a quantity of the gold he may have died possessed of; a similar custom we have seen prevails among the Fantis. When one of the Ashanti envoys, who visited our camp on the march to Coomassie, in January, 1874, committed suicide, his companions put his body in a wicker-work coffin, and buried it on the other side of the Prah. Each Ashanti threw a handful of earth upon the grave. The Bantama is the mausoleum of the kings, as well as a place of human sacrifice, and the great spiritual stronghold of the priests. In this sacred place is placed the skull of General Sir Charles Macarthy, who was killed in the first war. "By Wednesday and Macarthy," is a sacred Fanti oath. It is said that the Ashanti kings have converted the skull into a drinking cup, out of which, on solemn occasions, he quaffs his rum. Into this Bantama no stranger is allowed to set his profane foot. A great chief and a powerful guard watch it day and night. It is, according to the varying accounts, from half-a-mile to a mile-and-a-half from Coomassie, and is connected with the capital by a broad road.

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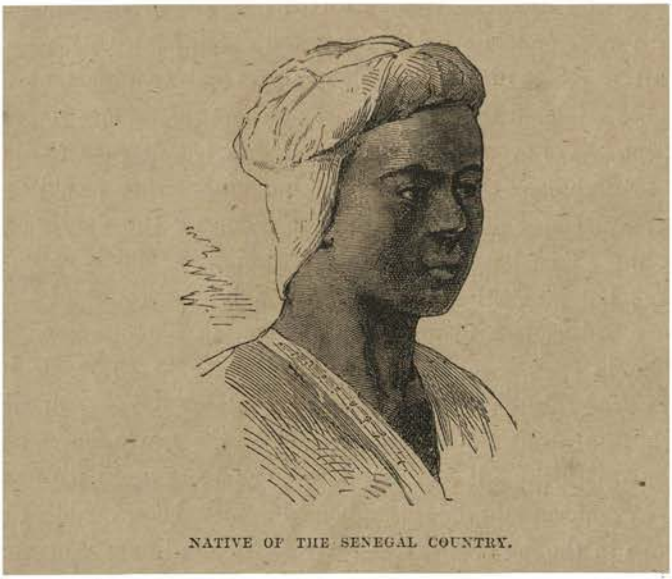
* Reade's "Ashanti Campaign," p. 53.

On the death of any person of rank, numerous human lives are sacrificed—the number being proportionate to the dignity of the deceased.. On the death of the mother of the king who ruled the country in Bowdich's time, no less than 3,000 human beings were butchered; and on his own death, though we have no certain information, most probably the number was doubled. The funeral rites of a great captain are often repeated regularly every week for two or three months at a stretch, and on each occasion about 200 persons sacrificed. These victims are usually slaves or culprits, and principally females, but it is usual to "wet the grave" with the blood of a freeman of respectability.

Among the rites of the Dahomey and Ashanti nations few are more familiar, in name at least, to the most cursory reader of books of West African travel than the so-called murderous ceremonies known as the *customs*. The word is an Anglicised or corrupted form of the French *coutume*, a general habit—the "general habit" in this case both in Dahomey and Ashanti—being the slaughter, in a more or less cruel manner, and accompanied with immense pomp and state ceremonial, of vast numbers of people, chiefly slaves and criminals, at certain seasons of the year. Long habit has rendered the performance of these ceremonies imperative. Abominable though they are, they have even met a faint, half-hearted defence or apology from white men; and in Ashanti or Dahomey the abolition of human sacrifice would deprive the people of one of their great annual spectacles, and thereby endanger the very monarchy itself. In Ashanti and Dahomey these "customs" have a great similarity, and have no doubt originated in much the same way; but we shall at present give a brief account of those of the former kingdom, detailing in a subsequent chapter the Dahomeian abominations. The ruling idea throughout seems to be to send messengers to the dead or to the gods in the persons of those who are killed. They believe that the body contains a spirit or ghost which exists after death, and which flits about the neighbourhood of the grave, and even revisits its old home, and holds converse with those it formerly loved, or plays pranks with those it disliked or has an enmity to—is, in fact, an etherial, disembodied human being, subject to all the passions and whims of such a one in the flesh. By the grave of the dead man is accordingly placed food that he may eat, or rather that he may eat the "spirit" of the food, and vessels that he may cook it; for food, vessels, all objects animate or inanimate, have equally souls or spirits which live in an after world, and which can accompany their spirit master on his journeys to and from that shadowy land. They also believe in a land of Hades, in a country below the ground where the "dead dwell in a life that shall have no end."

In the other world only kings, princes, and nobles enjoy all voluptuous pleasures; the poorer people wait on them, and share a little in their pleasures. Not only in this Hades or Heaven—for what its character is, is somewhat dubious even in their own philosophy—do men come to life and revel in palm wine and wives, but "they also believe that all garments he has worn out will then come to life again—a resurrection of old clothes; and besides this, his relations display their affection by giving him an outfit of weapons, ornaments, new cloth, crockeryware, &c., so that he may descend into hell like a gentleman. But who is to carry these things? and who is to look after them? Evidently his wives and slaves. So a number of these are killed to keep him company, and often a slave is killed some time after his death to take him a message, or as some addition to his household. In Dahomey this custom of sending messengers is organised into a system. Thus originated human sacrifice, which is, granting the truth of the theory on which it is based, a most rational custom. Death is disagreeable to us because we do not know where we are going, but to the widow of a chieftain it is merely a surgical operation and a change of existence. That explains why Africans submit to death so quietly. A woman at Akropang selected for the sacrifice, was stripped according to custom, but only stunned, not killed. She recovered her senses, and found herself lying on the ground surrounded by dead bodies. She rose, went into the town where the elders were seated in council, and told them she had been to the Lord of the Dead, and had been sent back because she was naked; the elders must dress her finely and kill her over again. This was accordingly done. But there is another kind of human sacrifice—the slaying of men and women as gifts to the gods. In Ashanti the first form of sacrifice is practised. When one of the royal family dies, slaves (we have seen) are killed by the hundred. But I presume the bodies we found by the wayside, killed to avert the invasion, were gifts or bribes to the gods of the country. Be that as it may, one thing is certain—human sacrifices have become in Ashanti, as in Dahomey, public entertainments. The sight of an executioner, in a shaggy cap of black monkey skin—the kind used for ladies' muffs—chopping off the head of a slave, is to the Ashantis what the sports of the amphitheatre were to the Romans, or bull fights to the Spaniards of the present day.


NATIVE OF THE SENEGAL COUNTRY.

Public executions in all countries draw large crowds of admiring spectators, and in Ashanti this *penchant* of the multitude has been cultivated and developed into an artistic feeling. Decapitation has become with them an art as various as music. There are two movements in vogue—the *allegro*, in which the head is twisted away by a sharp knife with a dextrous turn of the wrist; and the *adagio*, in which the head is sawn off in slow time."* So common had this spectacle become in the days prior to the fall of Coomassie, that when the little son of one of the German missionaries—who was freed by King Koffee on the approach of our troops—

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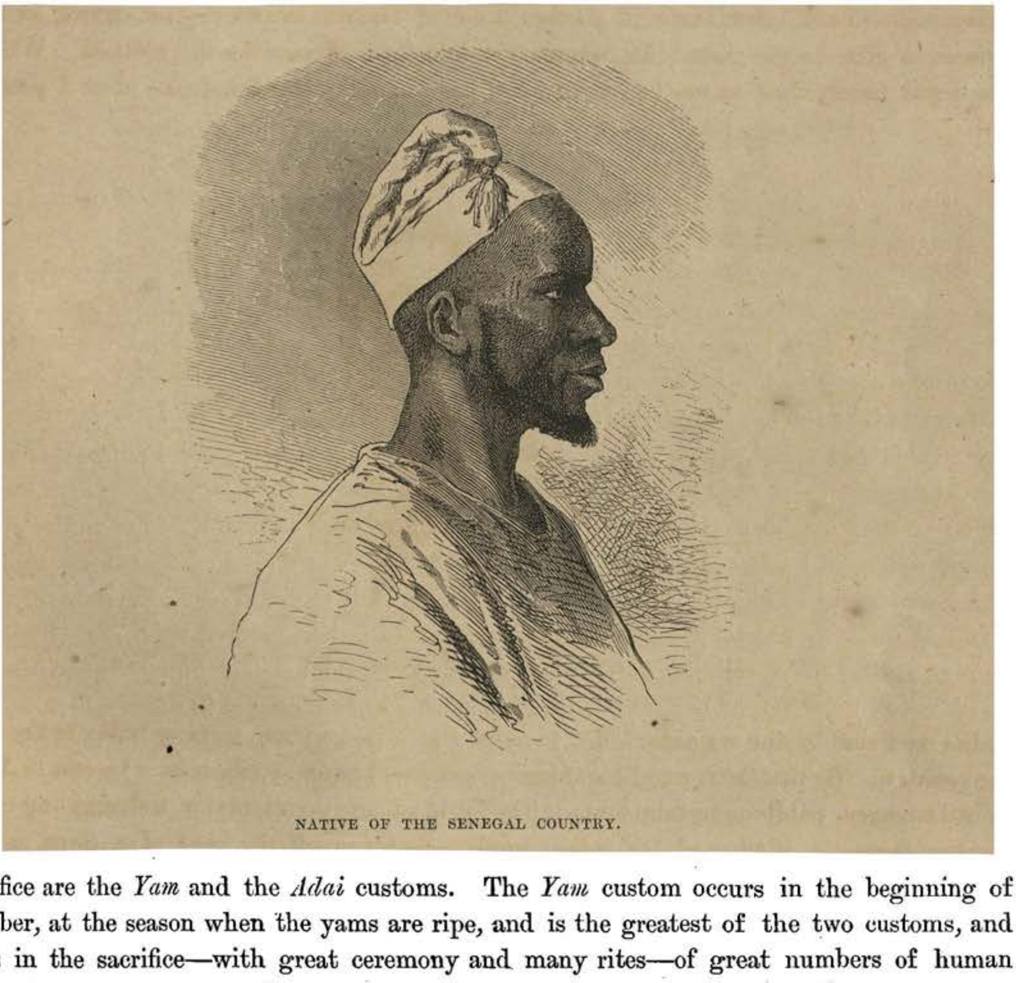
* Reade, "Ashanti Campaign," p. 363.

was angry at any one, he would exclaim, "Your head will fall to-morrow!" Slicing off heads had been one of the most common sights that the child had seen, and was in his eyes the punishment for the most trifling offence.

The place where the bodies are cast is a swampy place near the town, and when our troops visited it, the effluvium from swollen, putrifying bodies filled the air with carrionish stench. The whole of the blood-stained town had the odour of death, and every breeze that was wafted over it bore on it the smell of decaying humanity, while piles of skulls and human bones testified to the long continuance of these horrible sacrifices. In Ashanti the two great seasons of sacrifice are the *Yam* and the *Adai* customs. The *Yam* custom occurs in the beginning of September, at the season when the yams are ripe, and is the greatest of the two customs, and consists in the sacrifice—with great ceremony and many rites—of great numbers of human beings before the yams are allowed to be gathered. The *Adai* customs—divided into the "Great" and "Little"—are celebrated every three weeks, though with less expenditure of life each time than during the *Yam* celebration; yet, considering the frequent repetition of the rites, the sacrifice of human life is appalling.



NATIVE OF THE SENEGAL COUNTRY.

Mr. Bowdich was an unwilling witness of one of these executions. He describes the executioners wrangling and struggling for the honour of putting the victim to death, and the indifference with which the poor wretch looked on at the preparation for his sacrifice, though he must at the time have been suffering great torture from a knife which is always transfixed through the cheeks of those intended to be sacrificed. He knows that he is to be slain weeks, it may be, in advance, but the exact hour is completely concealed from him. When his sacrifice is decided upon, the executioner approaches him unaware, and transfixes his cheeks with a sharp knife before he can cry out; otherwise he might take the "great oath," or mention the name of the king, in which case his execution must be postponed. The nearest executioner, Mr. Bowdich describes as snatching the sword from the others, and lopping off the right hand of the victim, and then throwing him down and sawing, rather than cutting, off his head. Several more victims were sacrificed on this occasion—which was on the death of a chief—whose heads were placed in the bottom of the grave. Several free retainers are often called to assist in placing the coffin or basket in the grave, and just as it rests on the heads or skulls, a slave from behind strikes one of the freemen a violent blow, followed by a gash in the back or the back of the neck, and he is rolled in on the top of the body and the grave instantly filled up. This is known as "wetting the grave" with the blood of a freeman.

In addition to the *Yam* and *Adai* festivals proper, there is usually one for the celebration of the New Year—at the yam season—when several hundred victims, generally culprits, are sacrificed. "Several slaves were also sacrificed at Bantama, over the large brass pan, their blood mingling with the various vegetable and animal matter within (fresh and putrefied), to complete the charm, and produce invincible fetish. All the chiefs killed slaves, that their blood may flow into the hole from whence the new yam is taken. Those who cannot afford to kill slaves, take the head of one already sacrificed and place it in the hole."

The brazen vessel, which Mr. Bowdich refers to as existing in the Bantama, is about five feet in diameter, and rests upon four small figures of lions. It is supposed to form the bath or drinking bowl of the great Ashanti god who presides over human sacrifice, and is sometimes overflowing with human blood. The Ashanti people are never tired of these fearful spectacles; the thirst for human blood never slackens, and the sight of victims sacrificed, spouting blood and mangled carcasses are their consolation for the loss of father, mother, wife, or child. It is at once a pastime and a religion which soothes their wounded hearts. Since the abolition of the slave-trade on the West Coast of Africa, the customs have increased in grandeur—which means in the number of victims sacrificed. Prisoners of war, and criminals which would have been kept alive for the markets of Cuba and Brazil, are now sacrificed as being of no value whatever. To have saved them alive would have been dangerous, they would have provoked a servile insurrection; and so they add to the sumptuousness of the *Yam* and *Adai* festivals, when they are sacrificed to the gods, or as messengers to the departed great.

The character of the Ashanti is cruel and vindictive, as is evidenced by the delight they feel in human blood. In addition, they bear the reputation of being secret murderers and poisoners—vices which, it is said, even the much-abused Dahomey people are exempt from.

The *religion* of the Ashantis is as rude as their rites in honour of it are bloody. "Nyonmo" is their supreme being, and nearly every heavenly or terrestrial phenomenon is one of his manifestations. They worship the earth and the sky as separate deities, which exercise their influence over mankind; while trees and rivers, which are also manifestations of their gods, can only exercise a limited power over particular towns, districts, or men.

"Kra," or the soul of man, existed, in their belief, before the body, and is transmitted from one man to another, so that the soul which left the body of an old man may have entered the body of the child just born. The priest will augur in regard to the destiny of the babe yet unborn, by asking its future Kra to tell one as to its fortune in life. It is even distinct from the body, and can give advice—either good or bad—according to its sex (for there are male and female Kras), to the body which it inhabits. Evil spirits and ghosts are, however, what the Ashantis, like the other West Africans, mostly fear; and to avert their displeasure, resort is had to charms or fetishes, which may be anything, from a human sacrifice to a pot of filth compounded by the fetish priest. At the entrance of towns, dwellings, and all places of public resort, are fetishes to avert evil; and the pathway of our army all the way from the Prah to Coomassie was strewn and littered with fetishes to avert calamity to the nation, and to prevent the sacred city being reached by us. Before our soldiers reached the confines of the country around, a fetish priest solemnly warned them not to approach; but as his charms seemed to have no effect on the progress of our gallant soldiers, he prudently retired, to save his skin, over which, apparently, his fetish* had no protective power.

"The Ashanti fetishes, or subordinate deities," writes Mr. Bowdich, "are supposed to inhabit particular rivers, woods, and mountains, as the imaginary deities of the Celts. They are venerated in proportion as their predictions (always equivocal) chance to be realised. The present favourite fetish of Ashanti is that of the river Tando Cobee, a river in Denkara, and Odentee, on the Adiree, are two of the others.

"The kings, caboceers, and the higher class, are believed to dwell with the superior Deity after death, enjoying an eternal renewal of the state and luxury they possessed on earth. It is with this impression that they kill a certain number of both sexes at the funeral customs, to accompany the deceased, to announce his distinction, and to administer to his pleasures.

"The spirits of the inferior classes are believed to inhabit the houses of the fetish in a state of torpid indolence, which recompenses them for the drudgery of their lives, and which is truly congenial to the feelings of the Negro. Those of superior wisdom and experience are said to be endued with foresight after death, and to be appointed to observe the lives and advise the good of those mortals who acknowledge the fetish; their state corresponding, in short, with that of the first race of men, after death, as described by Hesiod. Those whose enormities nullify the mediation of the funeral custom, or whom neglect or circumstances might have deprived of it, are doomed, in the imagination of others, to haunt the gloom of the forest, stealing occasionally to their former abodes in rare but lingering visits. Those who have neglected the custom or funeral rites of their family are thought to be accursed and troubled by their spirits.

"There are two orders of fetishmen. The first class dwell with the fetish, who has a small round house, built generally at a distance from the town. They question the oracle respecting the future fortune of a state individual, convey its advice, and enjoy the attention of the *audible* spirits of those any member of their family would question respecting property or domestic circumstances.

"The inferior class pursue their various occupations in society, assist in customs and superstitious ceremonies, and are applied to as fortune-tellers or conjurors are in Europe; especially in cases of theft, when, from a secret system of espionage, and a reluctance, frequently amounting to a refusal to discover the culprit, or to do more than replace the property whence it was taken, they are generally successful. The magical ceremony consists in knotting, confusing, and dividing behind the back several strings and shreds of leather. They are also frequently applied to by slippery wives to work charms to keep their husbands in ignorance of a projected intrigue, which they affect to do.

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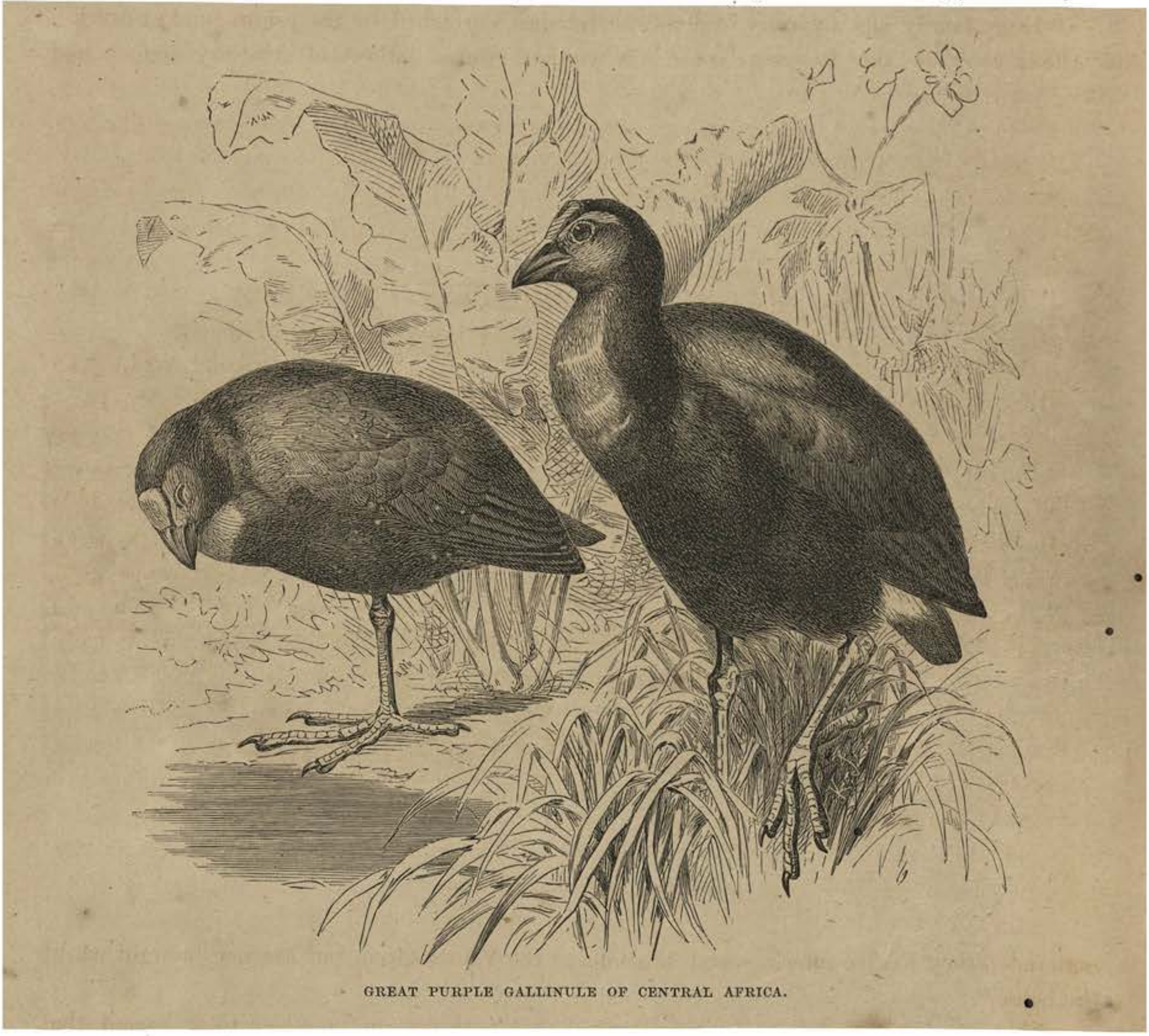
* *Fetish* is from the Portuguese *festico*, witchcraft.

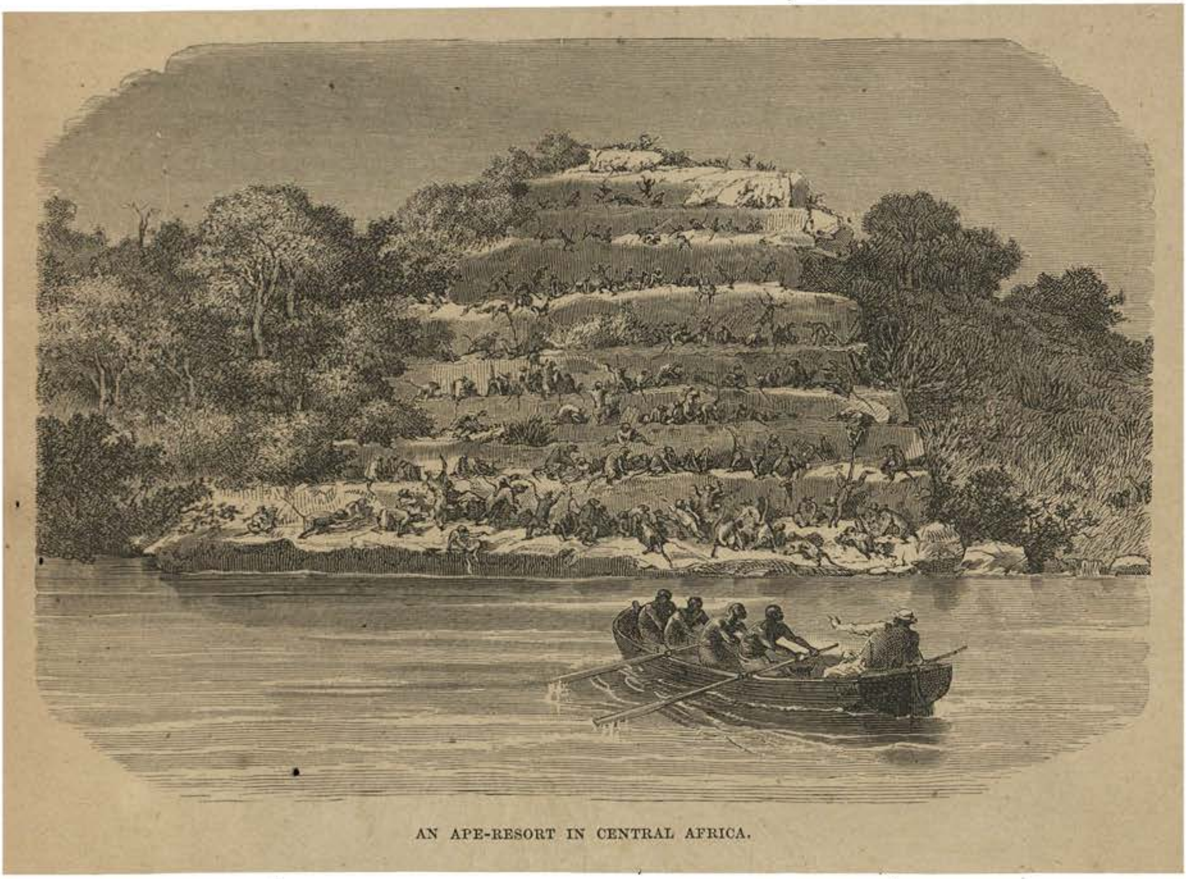
"The primary dignitary is hereditary in families, as the priesthood in Egypt, celibacy not being enjoined; their property is also hereditary, and they possess other immunities. The latter order is frequently augmented by those who declare that the fetish has suddenly seized or come upon them, and who, after inflicting great severities upon themselves, in the manner of the convulsionists, are ultimately acknowledged. The fetish-women, generally preferred for medical aid, as they possess a thorough knowledge of barks and herbs, deleterious and sanative, closely resemble the second class of Druidesses as described, I think, by Mela—they seem utterly abandoned wretches.



GREAT PURPLE GALLINULE OF CENTRAL AFRICA.

"Half the offerings to the fetish are pretended to be thrown into the river; the other half belongs to the priests. The king's offering is generally ten ounces and three or four slaves; that of a poor subject about four ackies. Children are generally vowed to the service of the fetish before their birth. A slave, flying to the temple, may dash or devote himself to the fetish; but, by paying a fee of two ounces of gold and four sheep, any person shuts the door of the fetish-house against all his runaway slaves.

"Every family has a variety of domestic fetishes, furnished by the priests, and answering to the *penates* of the Romans; some are wooden figures, others of arbitrary shapes and materials; they receive offerings and libations at the Yam custom, but are not brought out of the house."



AN APE-RESORT IN CENTRAL AFRICA.

This account is so full and circumstantial that nothing can be added to it, except that the fetishes in the extract quoted seem to be looked upon as gods rather than as something into which the gods enter or which may propitiate them. For instance, along the road to Coomassie, from Quisah to Fomana, a white thread was stretched, as a fetish to prevent our troops proceeding on their victorious march. Kids and other animals were staked by the wayside, and Mr. Reade mentions as one of their fetishes a wooden apparatus—a model of knives and guns, with points and muzzles turned towards the south. A man had also been impaled, and mutilated in an indescribably horrible manner, and then laid by the wayside, "to propitiate the savage gods of the country, and to strike terror into the hearts of the invaders."

From the preceding sketch of the Ashanti nation it will have been apparent that, notwithstanding all their cruel rites, they are, though a barbarous people, not savages in the same sense as some of the many people we have already characterised under that name are. If properly instructed, and induced to engage in lawful trade, and to give up human sacrifice—though for some time, owing to the causes mentioned, this cannot be expected, even though it is one of the stipulations in the treaty concluded by Sir Garnet Wolseley—they might become the first commercial people on the West Coast of Africa. They have a force of character and a courage which, if diverted into proper channels, would soon elevate them over the abject, cowardly, and depraved races surrounding them. They have proved themselves on many occasions courageous soldiers, and, even to the picked troops of England, no despicable enemies; and in ability and statesmanship, the somewhat inferior stuff out of which West African diplomatists and governors in general, and those of the Gold Coast in particular are made, have met with more than their match. In the words of Mr. Winwood Reade, to whose amusing if somewhat virulently one-sided narrative we have been so often indebted—and he *ought* to know the West African—"it is a mistake to suppose that the Africans"—and the remark is intended to specially apply to the Ashantis—"are a stupid people because they have no books, and do not wear many clothes. The children do not go to school, but they sit round the fire at night, or beneath the town tree in the day, and listen to their elders, who discuss politics, and matters relating to law and religion. Every man in a tribe, and every slave belonging to a tribe, has learnt at an early age the constitution by which he is governed, and the policy pursued towards foreign tribes. In such a land as Ashanti the kings and chiefs are profoundly skilled in the arts of diplomacy. Their weapon of offence is treachery; the weapon of defence, suspicion. They have no scruples and no delusions. They never hesitate to betray, and always hesitate to believe."

CHAPTER VI.

THE FFONS, OR PEOPLE OF DAHOMEY.

SOUTH of the Gold Coast lies a region the insalubrious character of which has been celebrated by some palm-oil poet in lines more remarkable for their truthfulness than literary merit—

"Beware and take care of the Bight o' Benin,
Where few come out, though many come in."

This fever-infested territory is known as the Slave Coast. At its ports of Lagos and Whydah, in former times, the slave-ships loaded their human cargo; and here flourished and grew rich the potentates of this infamous traffic. It was essentially the region of slaves; hence the name applied to it. Nowadays the English have acquired the port of Lagos, while Whydah has to depend upon more legitimate traffic, now that the English cruisers and the almost exhausted demand have compelled the once famous slave barracoons, on which the captain of the war-ship often cast his eye, in former days, to see what was stirring, to fall into decay. Whydah, now a straggling town or village of ruined factories, is the seaward outlet of the most celebrated of all the West African kingdom, the dominion of the Ffons, or Dahomey. The kingdom itself is rather vaguely bounded, but may be said to lie between the river Volta (long. 0° 53″ E.), on the west, and Badagany (long. 2° 53″ E.), on the east; to extend northward to the Kong mountains (lat. 8° N.), the whole country over which His Majesty of Dahomey rules being about 4,000 square miles, of which only a small strip lies on the coast.

The kingdom itself, now that the slave-trade is virtually abolished, is unimportant, yielding, with the exception of palm-oil, almost nothing of great value to commerce. But the people, and especially the monarch, have been long notorious for the practice of some most abominable "customs," in regard to which stories more or less exaggerated have been circulated; and only recently have we obtained anything like an accurate account of this extraordinary race. The capital has been visited several times, and in recent times by several travellers, who have given us narratives of their observations. Chief amongst these must be enumerated Commodore Wilmot, in 1862; Captain Burton, the celebrated traveller, in 1865; and most recently of all, an English naturalist, Mr. J. A. Skertchley, who was detained for nine months in a friendly manner by the king, avowedly in order that he might give to the English public a true account of the ways of life of his capital, His Majesty complaining that he had been grievously misrepresented in this country. In our humble way we may assist his laudable aspiration by giving an account in outline of the manners and customs of this greatest of all the West African kingdoms; our facts being chiefly drawn from the narratives mentioned, and particularly from the excellent work of Mr. Skertchley,* with whose conclusions we may, however, venture now and then to gently differ, though his facts bear the impress of the utmost truthfulness.

Constitution and Government.

Gelele, the present King of Dahome, or Dahomey as it is usually spelt, is the ninth monarch of his line, his elder brother being passed over in the succession, on account of his drunken habits. The monarchy is absolute, within certain limits; yet a wise king always takes care not to run counter to the wishes of his subjects in any matter of great national importance, or when the public sentiment has been firmly and unmistakably expressed on the subject. Curiously enough, too, the monarchy is of a dual character, the authority of the real sovereign being theoretically supposed to be shared by a "bush-king." This idea was the offspring of the brain of Gézu, Gelele's father. This bush-king, though a mythical personage, has all the honours, privileges, and appurtenances of a regular sovereign, and the annual "customs" are prolonged to nearly double their former length in order to do him honour. He has a palace where looms are at work, making cloth for his household, pipes, and other manufactures—a monopoly of which is granted by the king to the landlord or keeper of the palace of this shadowy being. In addition, he has his officers of state; and in a word, he is the "double" of the real king or "akhosu;" and whatever is done for the king in public has to be thrice repeated—once for the Amazons, or female guards, of whom we shall have occasion to speak by-and-by; then for Addokpon, the bush-king; and lastly for Addokpon's Amazons. Gelele is King of

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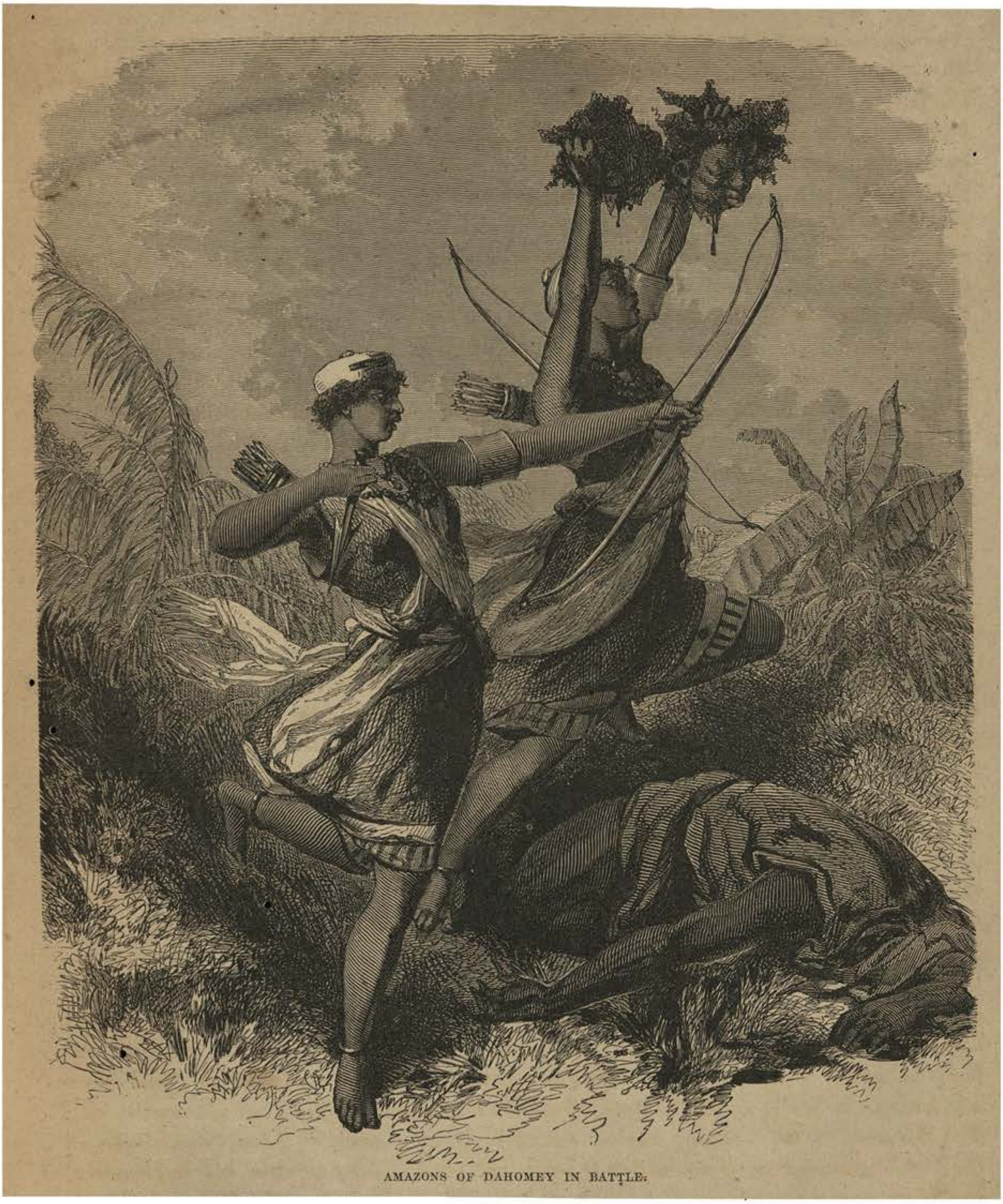
* "Dahomey as it is," &c. (1874), p. 524.

Abomey, the capital, and Addokpon of the "bush," or country, in contradistinction to the town. The object of the institution of this bush-king was amusing. Gézu was anxious to share in the profits of the palm-oil and other trade, but could not consent to demean his royal hands by mingling in commercial transactions. Accordingly the idea of a "double" who should be the trading monarch, while the real sovereign should have all the pleasure of spending the proceeds of his transactions, was seized upon. Gézu's double was called Gahqpweh, or "Market-day coming;" while Gelele's Addokpon means "Behold the eternal"—here, apparently, the real use of the mythical monarch being desired to be lost sight of. The palm-oil and nut-kernels sold at Whydah are all produced at the bush-king's plantation, but Gelele buys the rum, powder, and cloth. The result is that while the former bears only the reputation of a sordid trader, the latter gets all the *éclat* which an open-handed purchaser obtains! It may also be added that at the customs Addokpon has to content himself with a very meagre allowance of tribute; the empty honours standing in the place of the substantialities which go to the real monarch. It is a curious instance of a people systematically deceiving themselves for state purposes.

The king makes most of the laws, after submitting them to his principal ministers, whose opinion is always accepted; and if they approve of the "Act of Parliament," heralds are sent around and proclaim it to the people. The people have, however, the privilege of proposing an amendment on an old law, when the *pros* and *cons* are discussed fully in public, without any fear of offence; so that, on the whole, the legislative element is in rather high state of perfection in the kingdom of Dahomey. Minor offences are judged by the caboceers, but all crimes involving capital punishment are heard by the king, who alone has the power of life and death. Many of the laws are very just and appropriate to the kingdom, but others are mere caprices of a despotic and whimsical monarch. Take a few examples:—No person is allowed to marry a wife until he has first asked permission of the king, who can, if he likes, enlist her in the Amazonian corps; no subject is allowed to sit on a chair in public, to wear shoes, or to ride in a hammock; no goods landed at Whydah can be reshipped; no Dahomey woman is permitted to leave the country, and so on. Every man is liable to serve as a soldier, and the consequence of every person in the country is greatly estimated by his military rank and the position which that rank entitles him to hold in the different wings of the army—these being of unequal honour in public esteem. The "Nongan" is the prime minister and commander-in-chief of the kingdom, in addition to being chief magistrate, superintendent of police, and principal executioner. No visitors, unless they are created war captains, can hold any conversation with him; and, though prime minister, he has no dealings with civil business. All such contemptible affairs as trade palavers and diplomacy are beneath the dignity of an official whose sole business in life is war. He alone, of all the Dahomeyan subjects, can address the king with the prefix "Asah"—an onomatopetic word supposed to resemble a lion's roar. Like all the high dignitaries, he performs a good number of his duties by deputies, who are, however, men of no mean consequence. The second minister of the realm is the "Meu," whose duties are onerous and multifarious. All the visitors to the court are placed under his care. He is the executioner of all the bush-king's victims at the annual customs; collector of the revenue. Next to the Meu is the Avogan or Viceroy of Whydah. In addition there are several other officials whose positions do not seem to be very settled, and who perform various offices.



AMAZONS OF DAHOMEY IN BATTLE.

The eunuchs rank next to the ministers. They superintend the Amazons' quarters, and have many privileges not accorded to other subjects. The night guards of the palace, and the town police, are also officials of high rank. The trade captains, or "Akhism," inspect—if at Whydah

—all ships' cargoes, and receive the customs duties. Last of all come the commanders of the various towns, who form about the fifth of the whole army.

The soldiers are divided into several corps, distinguished by different uniforms. Each soldier is equipped at the Government expense, but they receive neither pay nor rations, and on the march are expected either to carry their own provisions, to purchase them, or to forage for them upon the enemy's country. They encamp in small bamboo huts. Every soldier is expected to bring back a head or a prisoner; and at the conclusion of the campaign the prisoners and heads are delivered over to the king, who pays each man a fixed price for his human plunder. Sometimes, in war-time, the king will, at his own charge, ransom captives of his people taken by the enemy.

Surprise is the chief tactic practised in war, and so secret is everything kept that, on the declaration of hostilities, it is rarely that the king tells even his first minister which town he intends to first attack. The army marches in silence, not along the regular coast, but by pathways cut in the bush; no fires are lit; and all stragglers are taken prisoners. In the dead of night the town is surrounded, and just before daybreak, when all is quiet, the town is attacked, and all the inhabitants, if possible, captured—the object of all such attacks being not to kill, but to take prisoners, who are either reserved for the annual customs, are sent as slaves to different parts of the kingdom, or are enlisted in the Dahomeyan army, when in such a case the highest offices of state are open to them. The women are made servants to the Amazons, and reside within the precincts of the palace. The town itself is usually destroyed, with all its other living inhabitants. If resistance is attempted, then the struggle is bloody, but short, for, as Mr. Skertchley remarks, African aboriginal courage is but a spasmodic quality; once let it evaporate, it never returns in time to enable the scattered army to rally. The first repulse is the last. Disease and hardship decimate the army while on these slave-hunting expeditions—for they are little else—more than the sword. If small-pox breaks out the mortality is something dreadful; three out of the eight kings of the present dynasty have fallen victims to this disease.

The Amazons.

Perhaps the most extraordinary feature in Dahomey economy is the corps of Amazons or female warriors. The word has got incorporated into the English language as expressing a masculine woman, but what the Amazons really are is not so generally known. Their origin dates from 1728, when the exigencies of war compelled the then king to organise a regiment of women, with whom he attacked and defeated the old Whydahs. Since then they have been a marked feature in the military establishment of the Dahomeyan kingdom. Under Gézu the corps attained its maximum of greatness. With that acuteness which distinguished him, he raised the Amazonian body from being merely a subordinate establishment to an equal level with the male soldiers, and created female officers, so that, by surrounding himself with a band of female viragos, bound to him by all the ties of gratitude and interest, he could at once put a check on too ambitious subjects, and nip in the bud the first signs of rebellion.

On a certain day—once in three years—every subject must present himself, with his daughters above a certain age, before the king. The most promising of those belonging to the higher classes he selects as officers, while the poorer ones are made soldiers; while the children of slaves become the servants of the Amazons who reside within the palace. This done, the other daughters are returned to their parents to be disposed of as they may find proper. Some of the selected girls are "dashed" or presented to the most meritorious soldiers as wives; while all the female children of these Amazonian wives are Amazons by birthright.

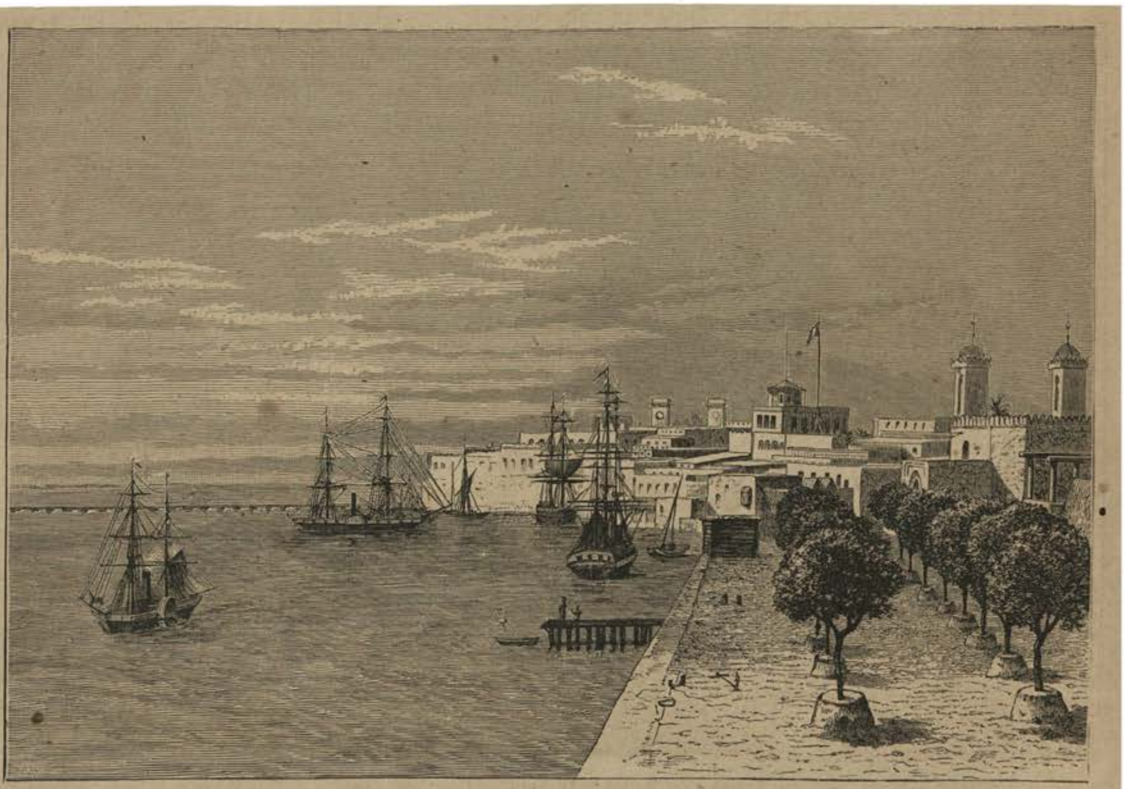
With these exceptions, every Amazon is a celibate; but as military discipline is not always equal to preserving the little god from his mischievous work, a fetish—the Demen—is erected over one of the palace gates, which by its power at once discovers any Amazon who is unfaithful to her military oath in the matter of celibacy. The informers also—who in these cases are generally jealous of the culprits—are never backward in causing the misdemeanour of the erring soldieress to reach the ears of the king, and her fears being worked on, she almost invariably confesses the name of her lover. The result is that both are punished—he assuredly by a cruel death, and she in all likelihood by the hands of her comrades.

The king has several Amazons as concubines, under the name of "leopard-wives," who enjoy many privileges.

Though the flower of the corps perished under the walls of Abeokeuta in 1867, their number may be yet about 4,000. They are divided into three brigades, each of which has a peculiar head-dress or method of dressing the hair. Each of these brigades is commanded by female officers and sub-officers, and are again divided into Agbaraya or Blunderbuss-women, the veterans of the army—only called into action in case of urgent need; the Gbets or Elephant-huntressess, one of the most celebrated corps in the army, and who on hunting expeditions are exposed to great danger from the infuriated animals; the Nyekpleh-hentoh or Razor Women, of whom there are only a few to each wing. Their special object of aversion is the king of the enemy, and the huge razor which they carry is especially intended for the decapitation of this monarch. Lastly, there are the Gulonentoh or Musketeers, and the Gohento or Archeresses, who are all young girls, and are more a show corps, their weapons being of comparatively little use in active warfare. In addition there are troops of camp-followers, hewers of wood and drawers of water. Even they enjoy certain privileges. If met with in the pathway, headed by a beldame ringing a bell, every man—unless bearing the "king's stick" as insignium of rank—must instantly disappear to the right or left; to look upon them would be a crime. Accordingly they are exceedingly important, and arrogantly jealous of their prerogatives. All the corps of Amazons—with the exception of the Archeresses—are armed with muskets or blunderbusses, kept scrupulously clean, but though these female warriors are brave to ferocity, yet they are poor markswomen, Mr. Skertchley considering that hitting a haystack would be about the sum of their accomplishments in this respect. The bush-king has also his Amazons, and every official, high and low, has also his "double" among them. If an officer is elevated to a higher rank, an Amazon within the palace also gets a similar title. The mothers and wives of deceased kings have also their representatives among the Amazons, or, as they are called in Dahomey, Akhosusi (king's wives or Mino-mothers). The term "mother" in Dahomey is, however, a term of respect, and does not mean a maternal relative. Though the value of the Amazonian corps has been justly celebrated as winning victories for the Dahoman king, yet at the same time we must remember that its existence is one of the causes of the slow decadence of that kingdom. "The proportion of celibates is too great for the population, being somewhere about three to one. Four thousand women represent twelve thousand children, the greater number of whom are lost to the state, which cannot afford such a drain. This, combined with the losses by disease and war, is one of the fertile sources of the national loss of prestige, which is only too true; and ere long, unless there is a change, Dahomey will be classed among the nations that have been." A special decoration is reserved for Amazons who have slain enemies in battle. This is a cowrie, glued by the blood of the slain man to the butt of the musket—one cowrie for each enemy slain.

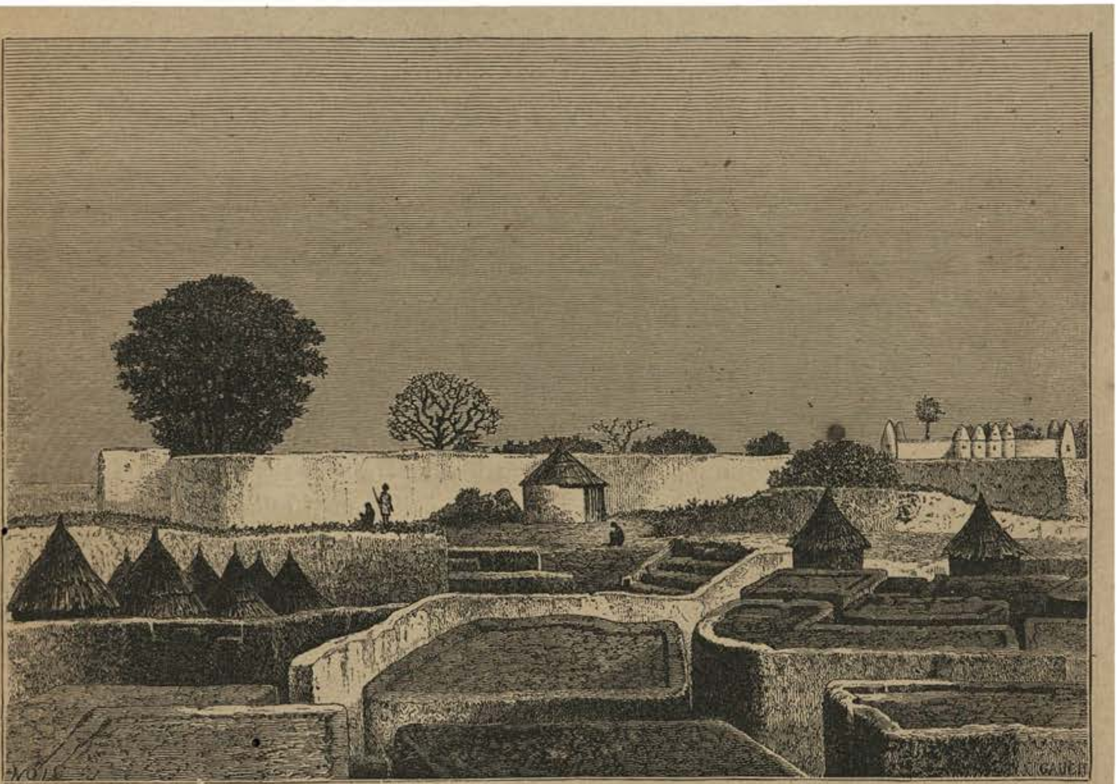
RELIGION AND SUPERSTITION.

Until Burton's time we knew almost nothing of the fetishism which constitutes the religion of the Dahomans. The traders in charge of the "factories" on the coast could tell nothing. Their talk was of oil, dust, and ivory, and they were more concerned about how much was to be made, honestly or dishonestly, out of the "black ivory" than what their religion or customs were. So, though for two centuries we have had intercourse with Dahomey, we are still much in the dark in regard to the nature of the deities and forms of worship. This we know, however: that they believe in a supreme being, and in a host of minor deities. Mau, the supreme being, resides in a wonderful dwelling above the sky, and is of so exalted a nature as to care very little for men and their trials. To obtain his aid special invocation must be directed, and even then he commits the care of human beings to leopards, snakes, locusts, alligators, and even to inanimate objects—stones, rags, cowries, leaves of certain trees—



ST. LOUIS, SENEGAL.

in a word, to "anything and everything." His assistant keeps a record of the good and evil deeds of every person by means of notches on a stick; and when any one dies his body is judged according to the records on this moral tally. If his good deeds predominate he joins his spirit in Kutomen or the "Dead-land;" but if, on the contrary, his evil deeds preponderate, then his body is entirely destroyed, and a new one created for the habitation of his spirit or soul. In this belief the spirit has no concern with the body; it is released, whether the deeds of the person have been good or evil, immediately after; and whatever is the social condition of a person when he leaves this world, the same will be his social condition in the world hereafter.



VIEW IN SEGOU.

All punishments are in this world; there is no after state of reward and punishment—a belief different from what prevails in most creeds. The slave on earth is the slave in the spirit-land; the king is still the monarch there. Their hereafter is an eternal condition of the state the deceased enjoyed on earth. The ghosts of parents or relations take great interest in the affairs of their relatives on the earth, advising them as to their conduct and affairs out of the depth of knowledge which their residence in the spirit-world has given them. If, however, the misconduct of those on earth is great, then this protection may be taken from them and given to entire strangers. The "customs" are sacrifices and compliments paid to these guardian spirits, and to stop them would be to insult their all-powerful and useful beings. When the Dahomeyan monarch requires special advice, he applies to the Bassajeh or holy women, who consult the oracle and obtain an answer. The common people in the same way apply to a fetish priest, who will act as a medium, or go between the gods and men. To every man is assigned at birth a certain number of deeds, good and bad. He is not to blame for those bad deeds allotted to him, but he can avoid committing them by making certain offerings to the deity through the medium of the fetish priest.

The Dahomeyan is thus an eminently religious man. Every action of his life is mixed up with his religious ideas, and is mingled with the desire of obtaining a status in eternity. Certain priests pretend to have visited this far-away land of Kutomen; and if a person is dying he will often pay a handsome fee to the priest to pay a visit to Kutomen, with a view to beg the spectral ancestor to excuse the sick man attending the summons. If the patient recovers, then the priest gets the credit of persuading the ghost to prolong his residence on the earth; but if not, then he has always the excuse that the spirit will accept of no subterfuge, and commands immediate presence. "Upon one occasion," writes Mr. Skertchley, "I saw a priest who was about to depart on a visit to Hades. He received his fee beforehand, cautious fellow, and then went into an empty shed near the patient's house. He then drew a circle on the ground, and took out of his 'possible sack' a number of charms, all tied up in blood-stained rags. Squatting down in the centre of this magic circle, and bidding us on no account to step within it, he covered himself with a large square of grey baft, profusely and elaborately ornamented. In a few minutes he commenced to mutter some unintelligible sounds in a low voice, his body and limbs quivering like an aspen. Half an hour of this farce ensued, when the fetisher uncovered himself, and prepared to deliver the message. He said that he had found considerable difficulty in obtaining access to the ghost who had summoned the patient, as when he knew that a priest was coming he hid in the bush. He said that the ghost was that of Nuage (one of the sick man's dead uncles), and that he was much offended by this summons not being answered in person; but in consideration of certain sacrifices offered to Gah, he would think over the matter. Rather an ambiguous answer, but just in the prevaricating manner affected by all priests, whether in Japan or on the yellow shore. From the statement of these priests it appears that life in the other world is much the same as in this—wars, palavers, feasts, dances, and other incidents going on in the same style as on earth. It appears that the clothes in which the deceased is buried accompany him to Kutomen, for sometimes a priest will bring back with him a necklace, bead, or other small article known to have been buried with the corpse of the person who summons the sick man." Captain Burton mentions the case of a man who, "after returning with a declaration that he had left a marked coin in Dead-land, dropped it from his waistcloth at the feet of the payer while drinking rum." A singular belief is that a spirit may be in more places than one at the same time. Hence it is believed that a spirit may remain in spirit-land, and yet be in the person of a newly-born infant. Thus all the king's children are inhabited by the transmigrated spirits of former kings, their ancestors. The African cannot grasp the idea of a deity omniscient and omnipresent; accordingly he has a number of media between himself and Mau, the supreme being. The Dahomeyan denies that his supreme being has bodily form, but yet he ascribes to him human passions—a strange medley of contradictions. They are not polytheists; they worship but one god, who is approached not through minor deities, but through go-betweens—viz., fetishes. They are in a world like the saints or angels of Christendom; "beings who have powerful influence for good or evil with Mau."

The most powerful fetish is Danh-gbwe, the tutelary saint of Whydah, and which is personified by the harmless snake so named. Its worship was introduced into Dahomey when the kingdom of Whydah was conquered and annexed. In Whydah, hidden from eyes profane by a thick grove of fig-trees, is the famed Danh-hweh, or fetish snake-house. It is, according to Mr. Skertchley, nothing more than a circular swish hut—the very model of the Parian inkstand to be seen in every toy shop. From the room depended strings of cotton yam, and on the floor, which, in common with the walls, was whitewashed, were several pots of water. The pythons, to the number of twenty-two, were coiled on the top of the wall, or twined around the rafters. All these hideous reptiles are sacred. To slay one, even by accident—for to do so purposely would not be dreamt of—used to entail instant sacrifice to the gods, and confiscation of all the offender's property to the fetish priests. Nowadays his punishment is not so severe, but still exemplary enough. The offender, after a meeting of all the fetishers of the neighbourhood is convened, is seated within a hut of stick, thatched with dry grass, and built in the enclosure in front of the snake-house. His clothes and body are well daubed with palm-oil, mixed with the fat of the murdered snake-god. At a given signal the hut is fired, and the materials being like tinder, the unfortunate offender against the majesty of the fetish is enveloped in flames. In excruciating torture he rushes out of the flames—his clothes on fire—to the nearest water, pursued by the infuriated priests, who belabour him with sticks, stones, and all sorts of rubbish. If he reaches the water he is free, and if he is fortunate to live, has expiated his crime. But few are able to run the gauntlet, and expire before reaching the cooling water, clubbed to death by the fetishmen—the *Danh-gbwe-no*, or snake-mothers, as they are called. As the door of the snake-temple is always open, the snakes frequently wander out after nightfall. If any person meets one, he must prostrate himself before it, carrying it tenderly in his arms to the temple, when his humanity to the snake-god is rewarded by his being fined for meeting the snake; and if he cannot or will not pay, is imprisoned until the uttermost cowrie is extracted from him. Ordinary snakes may be killed with impunity, but woe to him who injures the Danh-gbwe! The snake-priests have various neophytes or pupils, who are instructed in the mysteries pertaining to ophiological theology. These neophytes are recruited in the following way:—If a child is touched by one of these snakes in his nocturnal excursions, it is devoted ever after to the priesthood of the snake, and its parents are forced to pay large fees for its lengthy instruction in the rites of the fetish, after which he is allowed to practise for himself. Snake worship is one of the most wide-spread forms of animal-worship known, having been practised by most of the nations of antiquity, and at the present time by many barbarous or savage tribes, as we have frequently had occasion to notice in the course of these volumes.* Sir John Lubbock considered that the wide-spread worship of snakes points us to the fact of the worship having originated spontaneously in many different places and at different times, and that the worship of the serpent-god commenced originally as a malevolent being, who was flattered, as cruel rulers ever are, but that in process of time this flattery, at first only an expression of fear, came to be an article of faith. In ancient times Mr. Fergusson shows that serpent-worship prevailed in Egypt, India, Phœnicia, Babylonia, Greece, and, to a smaller extent, in Italy. In more modern times traces have been found in Persia, Cashmere, Cambodia, Thibet,

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* See also Fergusson, "Tree and Serpent Worship" (1870).

India, China, Ceylon, America, and among the Kalmucks. In Africa it was worshipped among the Abyssinians, and in Upper Egypt. All along the Gold and Slave Coast—viz., Guinea—this snake-worship prevailed at one time.

Borman, an old writer on Guinea,* mentions that some English sailors who had killed one of these serpents, which they found in their house, were attacked and killed by the natives. Not to enumerate other instances—even among the Mohammedan Felops and Mandingoes, and among the Christianised people of Sierra Leone, traces of ophiolatry are said to exist. It is said that the reason why the snake is so reverenced in Whydah is because, during an attack on Ardro, it appeared to the army, and so stimulated it that the victory was secured. It is still looked upon with equal veneration, notwithstanding the fact that it did not avail to protect the conquering Dahomeyans, into whose kingdom Whydah is now incorporated. It is said that young women who are ill are taken to the snake-temple to be cured, and that high fees are exacted for this service. In Astley's "Collection of Voyages and Travels," † is figured "Agoye, an Idol of Whiddah"—the "God of Councils," in the form of a human being, with serpents and lizards coming out of the top of its head.

Though nowadays the snake is looked upon as equally powerful in obtaining favours for its worshippers, yet in Whydah at least it has no visible representation in the shape of an image, its worship being confined to an adoration of the living snakes kept in the snake-houses in all the principal towns, and which, wandering about at night, are a perfect nuisance to all who dwell in the vicinity of the snake-temples. The Danhsi, or snake-priests ("snake-mothers" and "snake-wives" they are also called), number upwards of 1,000, and are of both sexes, married and single. They generally commence with a course of preliminary instruction at Whydah, and finish off at the great fetish town of Somorne. Another deity, almost as important, is Atin-bodun, who resides in some curious variety of earthenware, and is personified by an upturned pot, cullender, or other specimen of the ceramic art. He is worshipped by offerings of water poured into the little pot, and is especially powerful in averting and curing diseases, especially fevers. He also inhabits any tall tree, such as the Loko or poison-tree, a decoction of the leaves of which are used to detect any hidden crime. Atin-bodun is served by almost as many priests as the snakes, but they are not of such high rank. Another deity is Hir, "the Dahoman Neptune," who has the sea at Whydah in his charge. Canoe-men worship and offer up donations of food to him to induce him to save them from the rolling surf. "Formerly," Mr. Skertchley remarks, "the king was accustomed to send a man dressed as a caboceer, with umbrella, stool, beads, and other insignia of his rank, to the beach, where he was placed in a canoe by the Huno [priest], and, after sundry offerings and prayers, carried out to sea and thrown overboard." This practice is now happily discontinued.

Khevyosoh, the thunder-god is the last of the four principal Dahomeyan deities. He is the Slave Coast Jupiter, who presides over the weather, and slays all who offend him with his thunderbolts—viz., *abi*, the lightning.

Any person killed by lightning is looked upon as having incurred the displeasure of the thunder-god. The corpse is taken to the Khevyosoh-ho, or thunder-temple, and there stripped naked. It is then laid on a heap of earth outside the temple, previously deluged with

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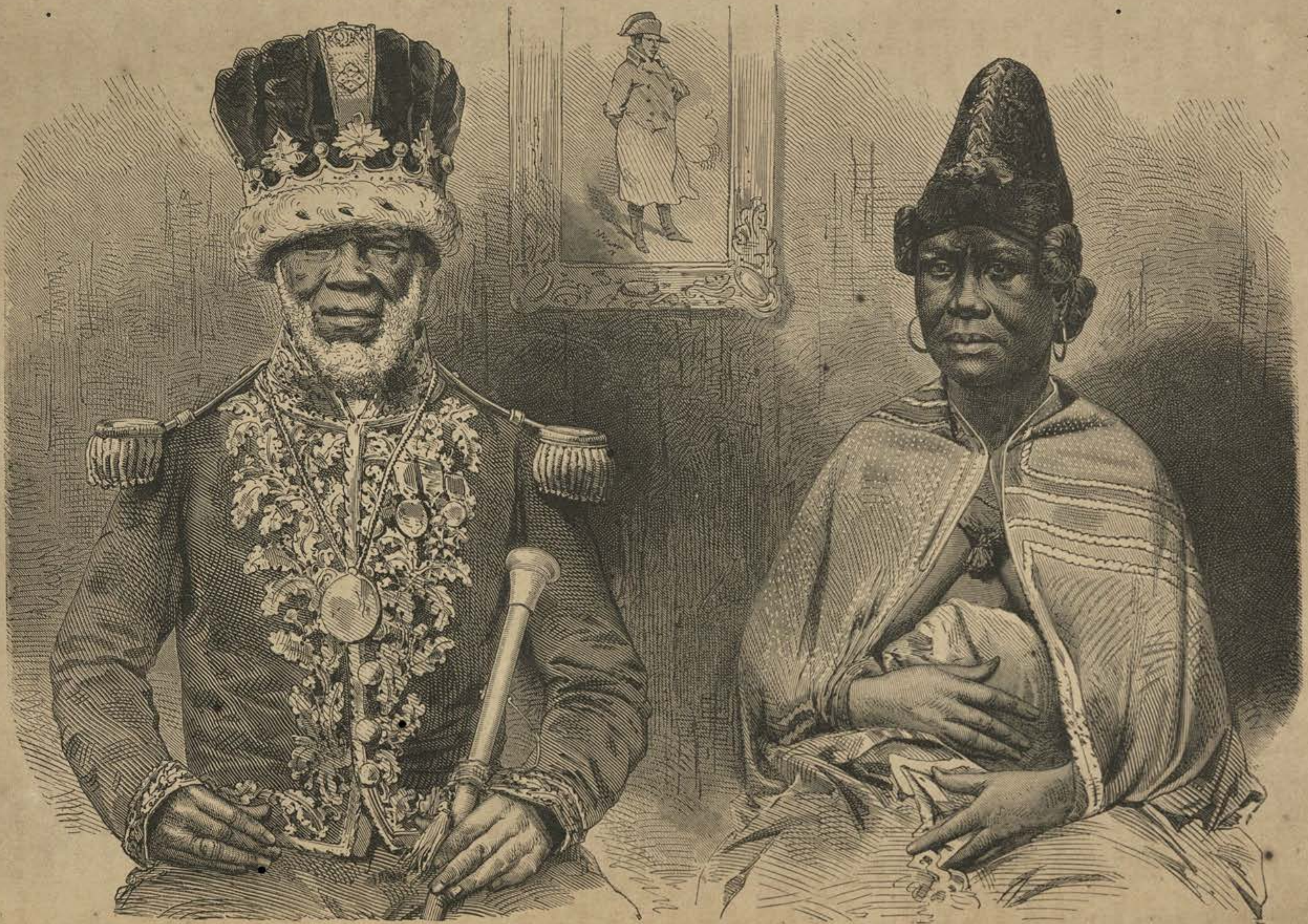
* Pinkerton's "Voyages and Travels," vol. xvi., p. 494.

† Vol. iii., p. 50.



KING WILLIAM, OR "ROI DENIS" OF THE GABOON, AND HIS PRINCIPAL WIFE.

water. In solemn procession, the priests, male and female, then march round the body, each one carrying a calabash, containing a piece of goat's-flesh seasoned with pepper and salt, and calling out, "Come and buy goat's meat!" at the same time pretending to eat the flesh of the corpse. Mr. Skertchly, however, asserts that Burton is mistaken when he states that the flesh of the corpse is chewed; it is the goat's flesh which is eaten. There are many minor deities around whom interesting superstitions cling, but our space will not permit us to describe them. The war-god, Legba; "the Dahoman Priapus," the special patron of all who wish large families; Akwashi, who presides over childbirth; Gbwejeh, the goddess of hunting; Ajaruma, the fetish under whose tutelary care all the Europeans at Whydah are placed (his temple, a shed covering a whitewashed stump, being in the garden of the English fort); Zo, the god of fire; Sapatan, the goddess for small-pox; Demen, the fetish which presides over the chastity of the Amazons (already referred to); Hoho, the preserver of twins; and Aizan, the national Ædile, who presides over the roads, preserving travellers from gnomes and all bad characters of that sort—are the chief ones. "Every market and town gate is under its [Aizan's] protection, and its pottery is seen along all the roads in the country—a heap of clay surmounted by a small round pot containing a decomposing mixture of cankie, palm-oil, &c." The lesser gods, or fetishes rather, presiding over towns and particular places, are endless; nor shall we trouble the reader with the list. What we have given are sufficient to show the general character of the Dahomeyan pantheon. We shall only mention Afa, the god of wisdom, who is consulted on all occasions by all who can afford the fee of a pigeon or a fowl to his priest. "It is the Dahomeyan representative of the Grecian geomancy, a custom prevalent all the world over. It is performed by means of sixteen palm-nuts, denuded of the husk, and marked with peculiar mystic hieroglyphics. The book of fate is a board about two feet long and six inches broad, with a handle at one end. One side of this contains sixteen series or marks called the 'mothers,' and the other a similar number of 'children,' formed by the combination of the mother marks. Each mother has a special symbol, to which certain mystic properties are assigned, such as giving the diviner luck in hunting, sowing, war-palavers, house-building, &c. Certain days are sacred to certain mothers; and the diviner always consults Afa as to the proper day to commence any important undertaking, as marrying a new wife, building a house, or sowing corn." The method of divining is peculiarly interesting. But for an account of this we must refer the reader to Mr. Skertchly's interesting work.

Curiously enough, though the Dahomeyans worship such gross gods, they do not practise the cruelty which usually results from such a belief. No Dahomeyan (Ffon) believes that any person can bewitch another, for they consider the supreme being so elevated above mortals that he could not deign to depute any of his power to man. Accordingly he can only be approached by the priests, or by the person who wishes a favour; but that person can in no case obtain a favour from the deity either to the injury or the benefit of any other person. Accordingly, we see none of the jealousies and accusations of witchcraft, and consequent *vendetta*, which in Central or Equatorial Africa so frequently follow the death of a person. With the exception of the snake-priests, the office is hereditary in certain families, though occasionally a layman will be taken on trial, who—if after undergoing solitary confinement and certain mysterious rites, he shows the priestly afflatus—is taken into the order to be initiated. This inspiration generally takes the form of a violent spirit, which so exhausts the candidate that he usually faints after it has passed away. On coming out of it he relates the vision which he has seen—it may be relating to the thunder-god, the fire-god, or some other deity—and he is then taken as a neophyte to be instructed in the particular fetish belonging to that form of vision. Three years is the usual time devoted to instruction, during which time heavy fees are exacted; after which he visits his friends. This over, he is expected for ever to renounce any influence which they might exert upon him to obtain fetishes for them below the authorised standard. The chief priest of his order then gives him a new cloth, and a fetish name, and, if he is resident at the capital, presents him to the king. Some of the priests have also other occupations; but this is not necessary, as they make a large income, and fare sumptuously every day, on the credulity of their clients. More women than men are fetish priests. Young female children will frequently be dedicated shortly after birth to a particular fetish. To give birth to a priestess is accounted a high honour. Such consecrated female fetishes are held in profound respect. At one time the power of the priest, as in this country, was practically unlimited. He could only be punished by an ecclesiastical court. But nowadays, though they are sufficiently potent, their wings are considerably clipped. During the practice of the fetish they cannot be apprehended, but at other times they are subject to all the mishaps of laymen, with whom, in the eye of the law, they are equal, and equally liable to punishment. *Theoretically*, however, it is only the *lay* portion of the priest which suffers: the *ecclesiastical* bit of his body is invulnerable!

Fetish spouses are not subject to the same frequent chastisements which are inflicted on lay wives. Many peculiarities of dress attach to the priesthood, and in addition the "clergy" have various privileges. Among others may be mentioned that of a priest having the power of taking any man's wife who pleases his fancy; the order has also the privilege "to beg in public; to collect tithes from their votaries; and to wear many dresses forbidden to the laity."

THE "CUSTOMS."

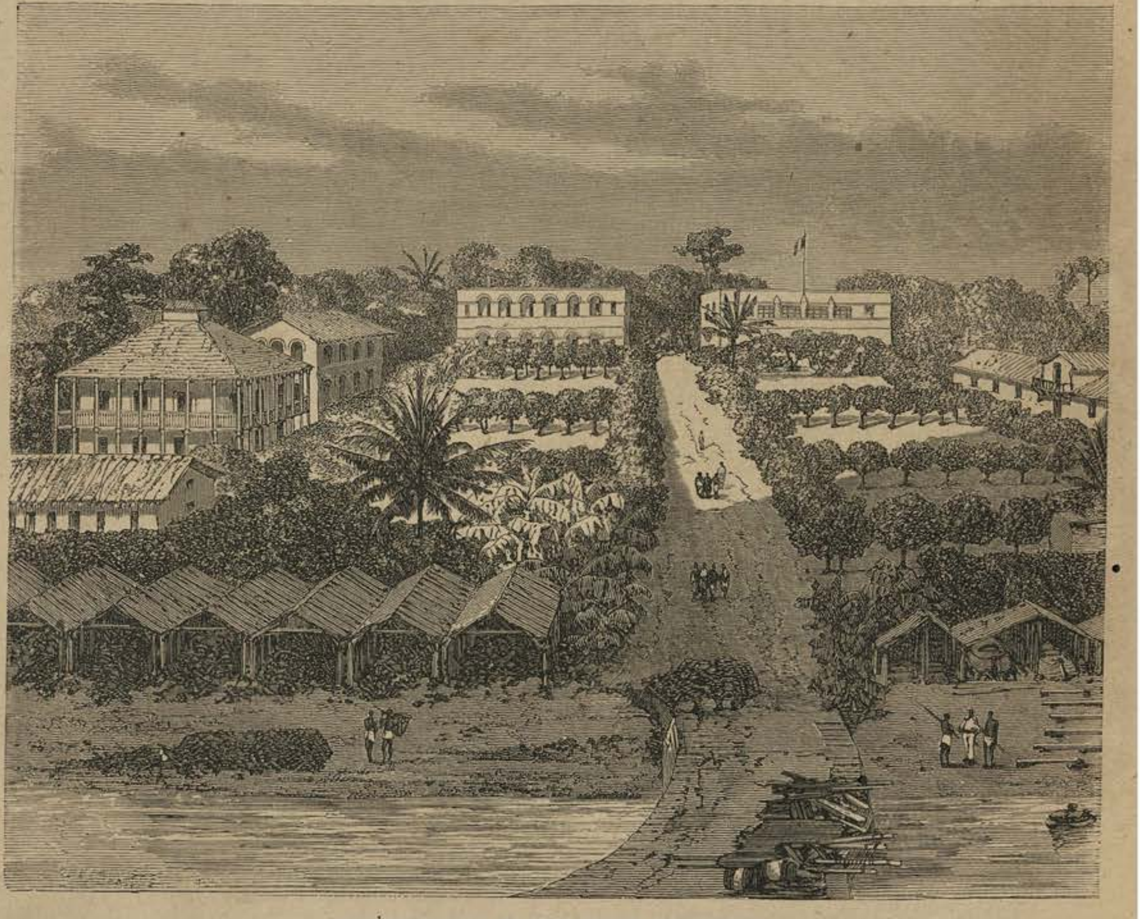
We have spoken of this horribly savage rite when speaking of the Ashantis; but among the Dahomeyans they attain even greater magnitude, and, to our ideas, barbarity. At certain seasons the king and people seem to perfectly revel in human blood and slaughter. These Customs are of two kinds. The grand Customs, only performed on the death of a sovereign, after his successor has got firmly established on the throne (or stool, rather, for such is the Dahomeyan *physical* seat of authority); and the annual Customs, which take place every autumn, but are much less imposing than the grand Customs. The annual Customs also vary—one being held every alternate year. The first is called *So-sin,* the Horse-tie Custom, and the other *Attoh,* the Platform Custom. The grand Customs seem to be almost coeval with the establishment of the Dahomeyan monarchy, and appear to consist of the same ceremonies as those practised at the annual Customs, only on a much grander scale. The annual Customs are of comparatively recent date, viz., 1708, when King Akabah died; and his successor was so delighted with the effect of the Akhosutanum or grand Customs instituted in his honour, that he ordered them to be repeated on a smaller scale every year in the capital. After the Eyeos were expelled from Kana by King Gézu, the annual Eyeos Customs, celebrated in June, were instituted, and are intended to bring to remembrance the deliverance of the Dahomeyans from their enemies. At the annual Customs taxes are paid to the king by every subject, from the highest to the lowest; punishments are inflicted on criminals, and rewards bestowed on the meritorious. At this season also the prize-money—the produce of the sale of captives and animals taken in the last year's wars—is divided, the junior officers receive promotion to higher ranks, the Amazons whom the king selects as wives are bestowed on the lucky officers, the royal princesses are married to some high officers of state, and new laws are passed, and old ones repealed or amended. The chief object of these Customs, apart from being a brutal spectacle—a "Roman holiday"—is to send messengers to the departed monarchs, to show them that they are not forgotten on earth, and to beg them to still give the benefit of their advice to those on earth. If the human sacrifices were discontinued, every Dahomeyan believes that the glory of the kingdom would depart; and the king, who is by no means the fiend sometimes represented, but a pretty well-informed hospitable sort of barbarous gentleman, informed Mr. Skertchly that he had no desire to see them continued—on the contrary, would gladly abolish them, provided that such a proposal would not endanger his throne, from the indignation of the Dahomeyan Conservatives. Mr. Skertchly, whose eyes, it must be confessed, have been a good deal blinded by the hospitality shown him, and who in some things is rather prejudiced, attempts to make a faint defence of the Customs, on the plea that the butchery is not an indiscriminate one, but of convicts who have been sentenced to death after due trial by the king, or prisoners who have been taken in war, and are considered as in an especial degree meriting death. If all the criminals sentenced to death in one year in Britain—especially a hundred years ago—had been executed at one time, the number of victims to the majesty of the law would not, he thinks, have been much less. "How long," cries our traveller, in exultation, "is it since human crania were actually to be seen on Temple Bar? Besides this, the monarch imagines that he is performing a truly filial duty to his father by supplying him with these recruits to his ghostly household." In Mr. Skertchly's, as well as in Captain Burton's book, will be found a ghastly full account of these horrible rites—how the gagged prisoners are led forward in baskets, and are thrown down, and decapitated in the presence of the king and high nobles, and amid the shouts of the people, who sprinkle themselves with the blood, the bodies of criminals being allowed to remain suspended in the market-place until putridity and the vultures free the gallows of their loathsome burdens. The So-sin Custom, the bush-king's So-sin Custom, the Attoh, the Sin-wain, the Anlin, and the Azan-gbeh or Gun Custom, are the names of some of the principal of these rites. We will only quote one passage, descriptive of the Attoh Customs:—

"In the middle of the night a herald went round the town with a corps beating the death-drum, and announcing that on the next day the victims would be thrown from the platform.

"We had taken up our positions by eight o'clock the following morning, a large crowd having already assembled, the umbrellas of the chiefs forming a line of shade along the whole of the western side of the square. Soon after our arrival a body of about 700 men assembled near the Pwe shed, and in a short time the firing of muskets, and the shouting out of the king's strong names, announced the approach of the king. He mounted his green velvet hammock, and the 700 warriors commenced to perambulate the square, carrying the king in their midst, amidst their tumultuous firing of muskets, shouting, and wild dancing.

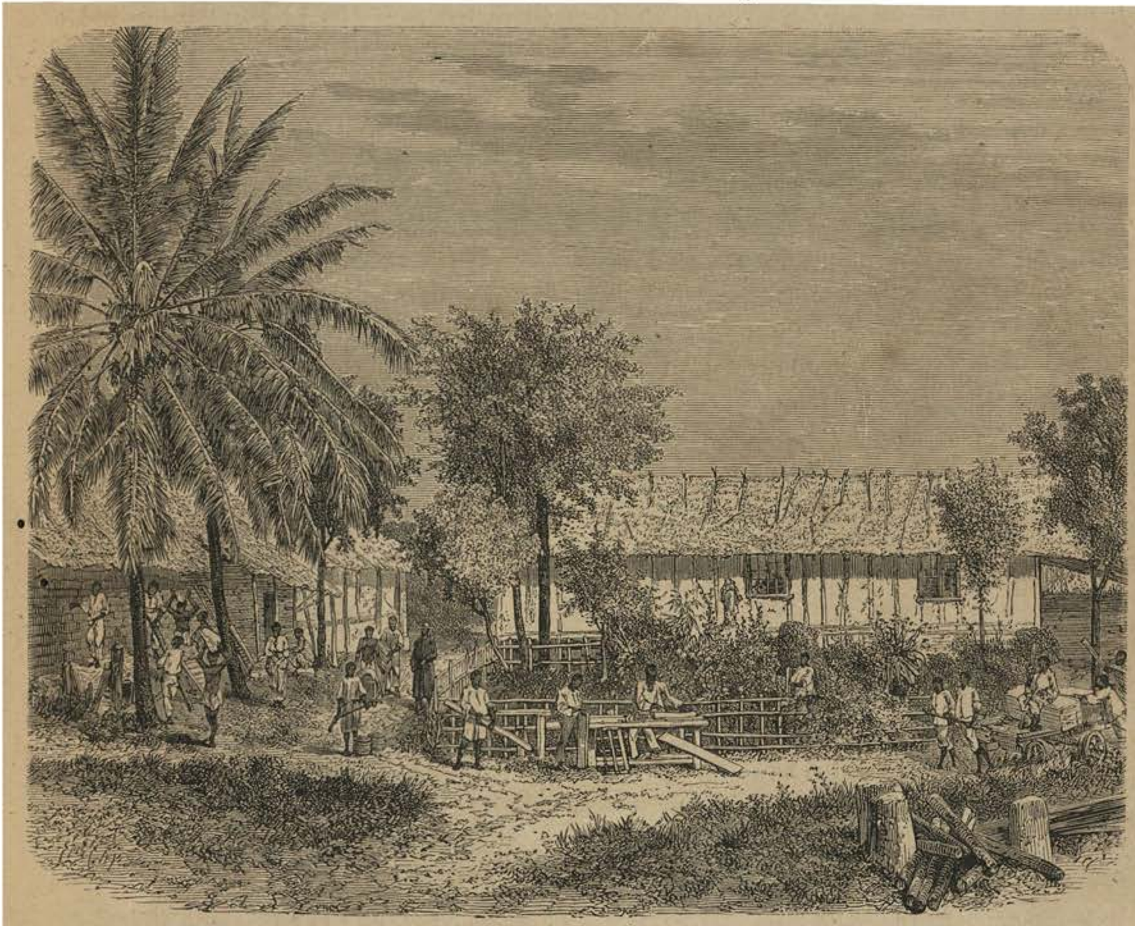
"After the usual three marches round, the king was delivered over to the tender mercies of the Amazons, and a similar procession on the women's side then danced round the 'uhonnukon.' When they had concluded their parade they mounted the stairs leading to the king's platform, Gelele having dismounted from his hammock, and preceded them, the way being pointed out to him by the royal officers, who are the John the Baptists for the king.

"Meanwhile a thick hedge of prickly pear, acacia, and other uncomfortable shrubs, had been planted round the platform, at a distance of about ten feet from its base. The soldiers who had perambulated the square now made their appearance, divested of every stitch of their finery, wearing nothing but drawers of the coarsest grass-cloth, evidently prepared to 'fight for cowries.' The king then made a short speech, exhorting the people to remember his liberality when they came to fight in reality for him at Abeokeuta. A few guns were then handed down from the platform by Adonejan, and given to the soldiers named by the king, the lucky recipients being straightway mounted on the shoulders of their comrades, and carried, *nolens volens*, round the palace.



BIRD'S-EYE VIEW OF THE GABOON SETTLEMENT.

"A few pieces of cloth, horns of powder of the coarsest description, and bullets of every possible shape except spherical, were then distributed, when Adonejan, descending the ladder, and proceeding to his umbrella, announced that the 'fight' was about to commence in earnest. Cowries were then thrown to the excited throng by the king, assisted occasionally by some of the Amazons. Small pieces of calico, chintz, &c., just large enough to make a loin-cloth, were then thrown, the struggle over one of these being furious in the extreme; and when at last it did come into the possession of any one, it was dirtied and torn to such an extent as to be almost worthless. Nevertheless, it was unwound and displayed by the lucky fighter, who, mounted on the shoulders of one of his companions, was often carried about for hours after.



CATHOLIC MISSION HOUSE AT THE GABOON.

"This Olympian struggle was continued for about an hour, when Ningan was sent for, and, mounting the ladder, called out '*Aíah.*' The gong-gong heralds took up the cue, and in a few moments the fighting throng was dispersed, and silence reigned.

"Presently a solemn procession of fetish priests and priestesses, headed by the Agasunno, clad in sombre grey robes, and preceded by several Bo fetish images and ironmongery, defiled in from the south-western corner of the square. In the middle was a native of Katu, gagged and bound to one of the baskets in common use by porters, and behind him, lashed to similar baskets, were an alligator, a cat, and a hawk. These were borne on the heads of some

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of the inferior priests, and a band of horns and drums played a kind of knell in staccato time, something after the fashion of a bell tolling—a few quick notes and then a pause. This sad procession slowly paraded three times round the market, and was followed by a second band playing on the jaw drums, and the Nunupweto, with its suggestive wreath of skulls. Finally, the standards of human crania brought up the rear.

"At the end of the parade they formed before the platform, and cowries, cloth, powder, and a gun, were dashed to the victim, who, together with the three animals, were then placed upon the heads of some of the Amazons, and carried on to the platform. Ningan then cried out '*Aiah*,' and ascended the ladder, where he was within reach of the royal ear. The man, the alligator, the cat, and the hawk, were then brought to the hedge of the platform parapet, and the king prompting Ningan, that officer made the following speech:—'Hear all the peoples of the earth what the lion hath spoken. He has made a So-sin Custom for his father, and shall he not make an Attoh if he pleases? Happy are the sires of those who are able to sacrifice to the memory of their fathers. You see the man, the alligator, the cat, and the hawk; these are about to depart to the next world to acquaint all the inhabitants of the great respect Gelele has for his fathers. The man will go to the dead men, the alligator to the fish, the cat to the animals, and the hawk to all the birds, to tell them of the great things done by Gelele. Hear and tremble when Gelele the lion king speaks.'

"The basket with the unfortunate man upon it was then toppled over the edge of the platform, the poor wretch falling on the hard earth at the foot with a force that, let us hope, stunned him. The basket was then suspended, and the executioner for the nonce commenced his horrid work.

"The knife was light, short, and without edge, and after three chops at the neck of the victim without separating the vertebræ, he put the bloody weapon between his teeth, and borrowed a heavier knife from a bystander, and with it completed his barbarous work. Sickening as was the spectacle, I was not able to discover the least sign of pity, horror, or disgust, on the faces of the throng; the monarch alone turning his head away from the fearful sight. The deed being done, the body was cut from the basket, upon which the head was placed and carried round the market, while the yet warm body was dragged off to the Aceldama, near Abomey, there to be devoured by hyænas. The alligator, the cat, and the hawk, were then similarly despatched, the alligator giving some trouble on account of the toughness of his scaly epidermis. A few cowries were then thrown upon the blood-stained earth, and we then departed, to partake of breakfast, which was not relished any the more after so appetising a sight."*

At the Anlin, or tribute-paying Custom, the blood of some of the victims was allowed to spout into a pit, the edges of which were protected by logs of wood. These pits were three feet square by three feet deep, and on the side of one there stood a small silver canoe, and several "Bo fetish" images were ranged around. As a specimen of the exaggerations which are circulated in regard to Dahomey and its Customs, the following description of this Custom has appeared in print in this country:—"The king possesses an artificial lake, and during the Customs he has so many persons killed that their blood fills the lake, and the king, stepping into a canoe, paddles about the gory sea!"

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* "Dahomey as it is," p. 352.

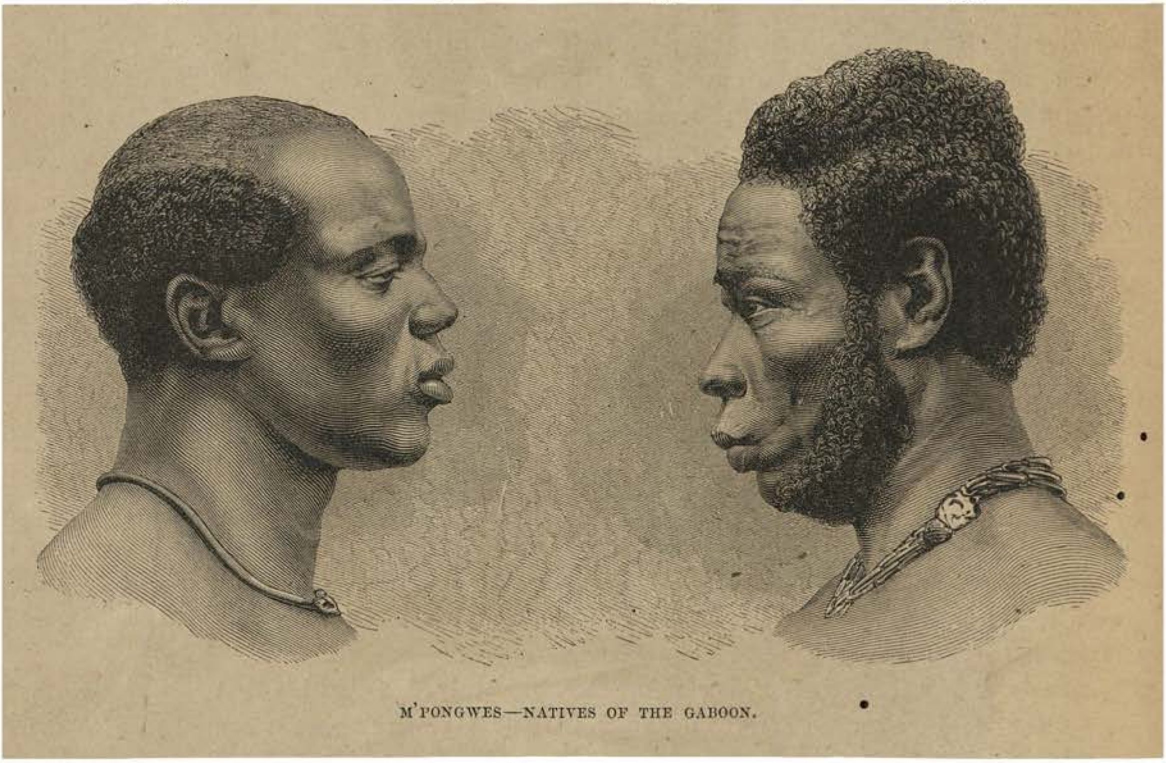
General Habits, Character, Arts, Marriage, etc.

The Ffons are a mixed race, little of the original Dahomeyan blood having been preserved except in the royal family, the members of which are distinguished by their lighter colour from the common people, who are now much intermingled with the various tribes which from time to time have got incorporated into the empire. Collectively, they are "of middle height, agile, and very slenderly made, capable of enduring a considerable amount of fatigue, but lacking the strength of the natives of the Kroo coast. The muscles of the arms and legs stand out conspicuously, and in their dances they exhibit a wonderful suppleness of limb, such as would delight a civilised gymnast. Their skins are of various shades of chocolate, from the dark brown of the Whydahs to the lighter coffee-coloured hue of the Alladahs [the original stock of the Dahomeyans]. Their necks are rather short, which, combined with their flat skulls, make them excellent hammock-men; and all burdens are carried on their head." Their physique is better than their morals. Braggadocia and bombast are invariable elements in every conversation, and truth is never resorted to if a lie by any possibility can be used. On most occasions it is preferred, even when veracity would better serve the purpose. Cringing, servile, and cowardly to their superiors, they are arrogant and overbearing to their inferiors. They trust no one, and are ever on the alert to overreach the unwary in any transaction. They are fond of noisy music, rude ungraceful dancing, and gambling. At one time they were a warlike race, but they are now degenerating from the once energetic old Ffon stock. Bloodthirsty and vindictive to the enemy, they fight, to use Mr. Skertchly's simile, "with the ferocity of wounded tigers," yet at home they show little or no affection towards their wives and children. After brothers and sisters grow up they show no more affection for each other than for strangers. The Ffon is, however, unlike the Ashanti, not a poisoner, nor does he resort to the practice of the ordeal for the discovery of theft. If a person poisoned another in Dahomey, he would be punished, *not* for murder, *but for destroying the king's property*. Albinos are looked upon as being under the special protection of the Deity, just as among some of the North American tribes idiots are.

The king is rather a fine-looking man. Mr. Skertchly describes his first interview with him in the following terms; and the description is worth preserving, as a contribution to the history of an African potentate—more especially as Mr. Skertchly accuses Burton of errors and misrepresentations, while the gallant captain is equally hard upon his predecessor, Mr. Duncan:—

"My introduction to the far-famed King of Dahomey was disappointing. I had expected to have seen a half-naked savage, with a grim bloodthirsty mien. Instead of this sanguinary monster, I beheld a tall, athletic, broad-shouldered person, several shades lighter in colour than his people, with a truly kingly dignity about him by which alone he could be recognised as the ruler of the country. His features were not by any means of the repulsive full-blooded negro type. His nose had a very appreciable bridge, and, though certainly inclined to the *retroussé*, it had none of the spread-out appearance predominating among the West Africans, which always appear to me to have a look as though they had been put on hot, and had commenced to run over the face. His eyes were blood-shot, and half-concealed by cataract, while his mouth, of moderate proportions, revealed even but tobacco-stained teeth between the half-opened lips.

He was slightly bald, and his head was shaven, with the exception of two small thimblefuls of wool on the left side, which were decorated with small strings of beads, and, like his incipient beard and moustache, were somewhat grizzly. His expression was pleasing, and a smile of welcome gave an agreeable charm to his features, and somewhat counteracted the small-pox marks which thickly covered his face. He was decorated with the usual Dahomeyan national tattoo—three short perpendicular and parallel cuts on the temple. His age might be about forty-five or fifty, but, unlike his inferior contemporaries, he was in the full vigour of manhood, while, in many instances, they were rapidly hastening to their decline. He wore his nails long, after the fashion of a Chinese noble, and smoked a long-stemmed silver-bowled pipe.



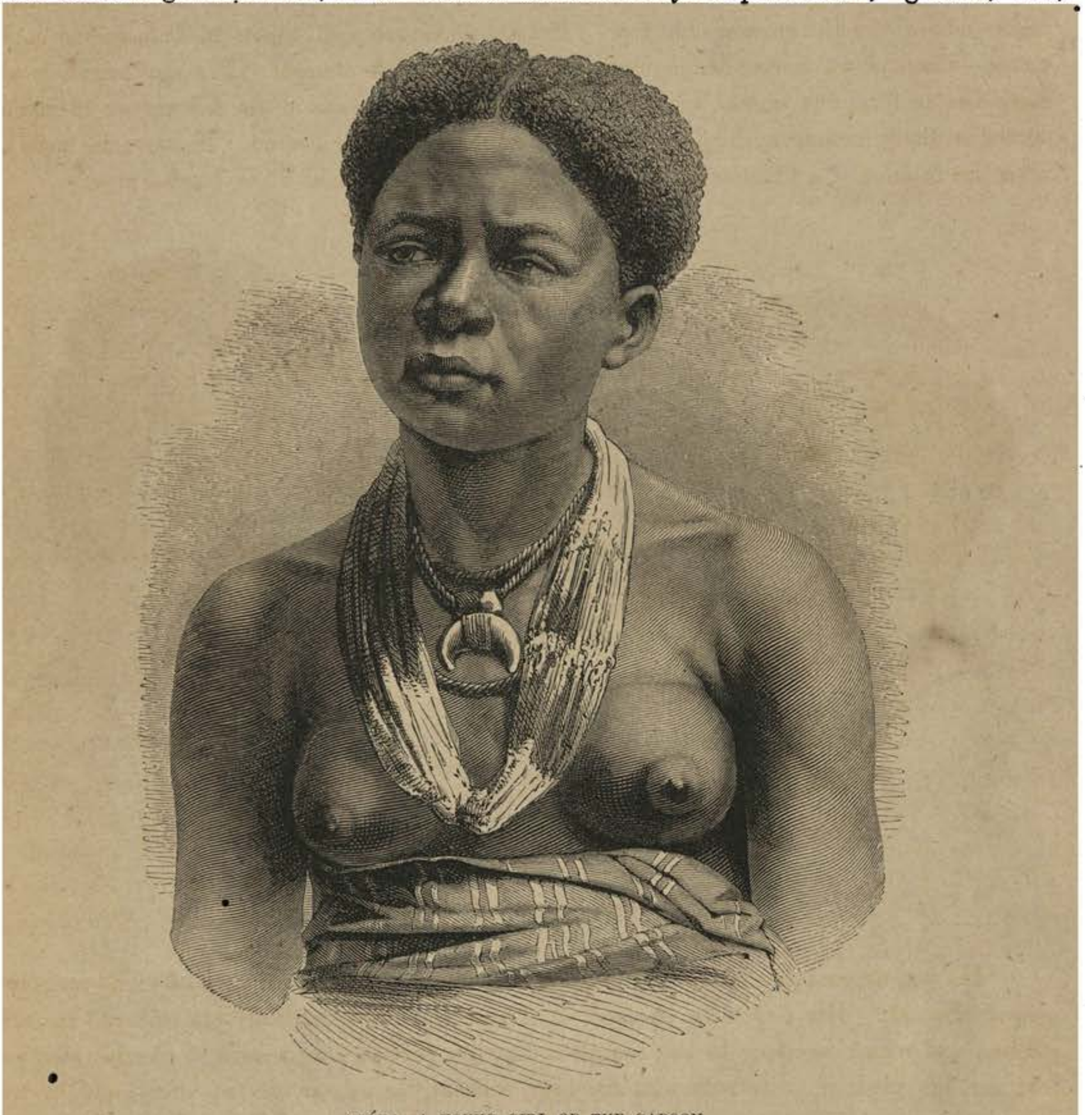
M'PONGWES—NATIVES OF THE GABOON.

"He was dressed in a blue-and-white striped silk toga, with drawers of violet-and-orange striped damask. His feet were encased in Arabic sandals beautifully embroidered in various colours, and which he alone in the kingdom has the privilege of wearing. As he afterwards told me, his rank is quite sufficient for him, without the accessories of finery, and he never appears decorated with the profusion of jewellery affected by the nobility. Upon this occasion he wore a string of black-and-white beads round his neck, with a square leather bag attached, containing some magical substance.

"His arms were decorated with four ordinary iron rings, each about half an inch in thickness, and a plain silver ring encircled the middle finger of his left hand.

"On his head a gaily-coloured pork-pie hat protected him from sunstroke, and all other evils were effectually guarded against by a human tooth strung on a piece of cord tied round the head.

"He was attended by a buxom damsel dressed in dark purple chintz, who held an amber-coloured parasol above him, while a second Amazon struggled under the weight of an enormous umbrella of scarlet velvet, having black birds with emerald-green breasts, and yellow hearts, upon each alternate lappet. Besides these there were the royal spittoon-bearer, with a silver chalice containing a little sand, which was held out for the royal expectoration; 'grooms,' who, armed with bandanas, removed the slightest trace of perspiration from the royal brow, and several others, whose every thought appeared to be absorbed in attendance upon the great king.



AKÉRA, A YOUNG GIRL OF THE GABOON.

"No sooner did he make his appearance than the music ceased, and all the nobles and soldiers saluted the monarch by copious shovellings of sand, which was thrown over the whole body by the lower orders, while the higher dignitaries contented themselves with bestowing a little on their heads and naked arms. This is the 'worshipping' of Scripture, and a universal practice throughout Africa when in the presence. As Burton remarks, there is no immediate rank between the king and the servile. Even the crown prince as copiously besmears himself as any other person, all being infinitely below the king in position. So, also, the nobles have the 'worshipping' performed to them by the rabble when out of court.

"The general salutation consists of a prostration before the monarch, with the forehead touching the sand, and afterwards rubbing the cheeks on the earth, leaving a patch of red sand on either side. Rising to the kneeling posture, the hands are then clapped in a series of three clappings in a diminuendo style, and if a number are saluting at once, they all keep time. A peculiar fillip of the little fingers is then given thrice, and thus ends the '*itte-d-ai*.' Then follows the dirt-bath, or *ko-dide*, a series of shovellings of the earth over the head, making as much display as possible of the smallest amount of sand. When receiving or asking any particular favour, the saluter completely smothers himself with the red earth; rubbing it well into the arms and neck, until it sticks to the perspiring skin like dough.

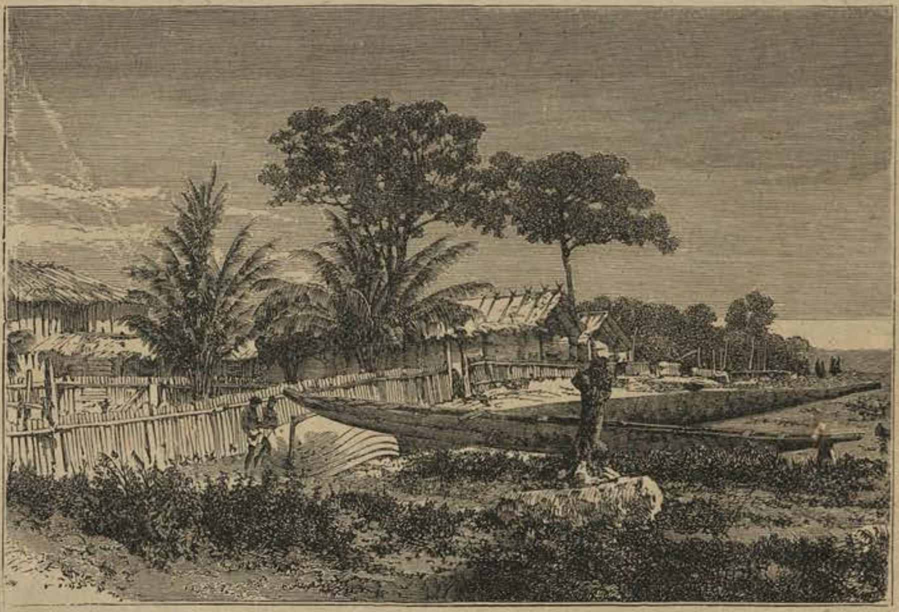
".Gelele came up to the bamboo line, whither I proceeded to meet him, and shook hands in the European fashion, without the national filliping of the middle finger. The Tononum then removed the cloth from the table. Meanwhile the Men came forward, and took up his position to our left. This minister is supposed to take charge of all whites who visit the king, and to interpret between them and royalty. I then saw that Beecham was trembling with fear in the presence of the great king, and, from the hesitating way in which he interpreted my words, I could not but think that he was calculating whether they were agreeable to the royal ear. I afterwards found him at the trick of altering my words to his own ideas, if he thought they might offend the king; and he was always telling me that if he gave the king a bad palaver he would be punished. We first drank water with the king; his majesty merely lifting the glass to his face, and then pouring it on the ground. He then poured out a tumbler of muscatel, and we prepared to pledge our mutual healths. He bowed, touched glasses, and whilst I drained off the liquor, the king turned his back upon me, and the Amazons raised a thick coloured cloth as a screen between us, while others called out some of the royal titles, or 'strong names,' as they are called. This was the signal for the outburst of the pent-up noise of the multitude. Guns were fired, praises of the king shouted out, bells were rung, and the jesters shrieked out as they rushed tumultuously afar; but every one studiously kept their faces turned from the king. The toast over, the Amazons removed the cloth, and called out 'Daybreak!'—as much as to say that now the lion has feasted, people may look at him; since it is a common superstition that a person is more subject to the ill-effects of malevolent wishes while he is drinking than at any other time. Whenever the king drank in public this same tableau was always performed, since no person is allowed to see so dreadful a sight."—(p. 144.)

The women are stronger than the men, and are not bad-looking; but before middle life, like all negroes and savages generally, they quickly degenerate, and at forty are shrivelled up old hags. "The breasts are of a decided pendant order, and the amateur artist who commences to draw a Dahomeyan woman had better begin his sketch by forming the letter W, and putting a human figure around it." As to their dress, "all use the *languti* T bandage, here called a *godo*, and above this the better class wear a very short petticoat or *nun-pwe*, and, if they can afford them, the peculiar drawers called *chokoto;* but if poor the *godo* is the only article of clothing worn by the male sex. Above these, a long toga, the *owuchyon*, is thrown, being of various sizes, according to the means of the owner—from nine feet by three to eighteen by eight feet long. It is worn something after the fashion of a Scotch plaid, being tucked under the left arm-pit, taken round the back, and then thrown over the left shoulder, leaving the right arm free. The women wear the cloth rather different, as it is simply wound round their persons above the breasts, and not thrown over the shoulder. Both sexes have a great partiality for beads, rings, and other ornaments, a common one being a plug of composite candle thrust through the lobe of the ear. Most persons wear a few beads threaded on to a string, and tied round the left calf, below the knee, and the richer sort wear a thick and heavy belt of beads around the waist, after the fashion of the Gaboon tribes. The women's petticoat is called a *dovoh*, and their upper dress the *agavoh*, which extends to the ankles. Both sexes wear a peculiar tattoo mark on the temple, consisting of three short perpendicular cuts, the cicatrice leaving a distinct scar. These peculiar cuts are national characteristics, observed among several tribes on the West Coast. The Kroomen tattoo a blue mark down the centre of the forehead, and the same mark is the brand of a thief among the Ffons. The Mahis [an incorporated tribe (Figure in vol. ii., p. 317)] cut a long slit from the hair to the commencement of the nose, in which some peculiar substance is inserted, which causes it to stand up above the general substance. The Salu people have an ugly gash obliquely across the left cheek, and the old Alladah Ffons cut out a thin slip of flesh from each temple, and turned it back towards the ears, in which position it healed. In addition to these national marks, each woman who can afford it tattoos her stomach with a series of raised patterns, a common ornament being a series of arches which look like a Roman aqueduct." These tribal marks are common among the Kaffirs, Australians, &c., as well as among the Negroes of West Africa. The method of dressing the hair varies according to the fancy of the individual. Some shave the entire head with the exception of the crown; and others denude the crown alone of hair; a third the entire head; while a fourth leave one or two thimblefuls for the attachment of fetish beads, or other ornaments. The hair left unkempt is a sign of mourning. The poorer folks never wash except when the rain performs this operation, but the higher orders bathe at least once a day; and all grease the skin to keep it from cracking in the hot sun. "They do not go about," Mr. Skertchly explains, "with the grease dripping off their skin; and a well-oiled Negro is not one-half so disgusting as a hair-oiled cobbler on a Saturday night."

Cankie, with a little animal food at rare intervals, constitutes the almost universal food of the poorer classes. It "reminds one of dumplings boiled with soapsuds," whatever those experienced in such a dainty may decide the taste of that delicacy to be. Yams, cassara, and other fruits and vegetables, are also occasionally eaten in season, or when they grow to perfection. They are fond of their food "high," even when the smell would completely upset a white man's stomach. The higher classes live much better, and have fowls and game frequently at their "tables," with abundance of fruits of all kinds grown in the country. Some of the grandees have even cooks brought up at the French factories on the Coast, and affect articles of civilised diet. The fingers are used in lieu of forks, and tables are only to be seen in the houses of the highest nobles. After every meal the hands are washed, the mouth rinsed, and the teeth picked with a chewed stick. A man's wives wait at table, and present the dishes to their lord on their bended knees, none daring to partake until he has finished. Water is the usual beverage, and is dear. It will frequently cost 2½d. per gallon, in a country where a person can live on 3d. per day. Intoxicating liquors are now even indulged in to excess by all classes. Every one's health must be drunk in public at all state ceremonials. The king, however, conceals his face while drinking, and it is not necessary to consume the fiery rum which invariably constitutes the toasting liquor on such occasions. The form is merely gone through, and the spirit handed to one of the mob around. The king even keeps a "drunkard," down whose leathern throat the king's surplus rum is poured at state ceremonials; his capacity for holding liquor is said to be something extraordinary.

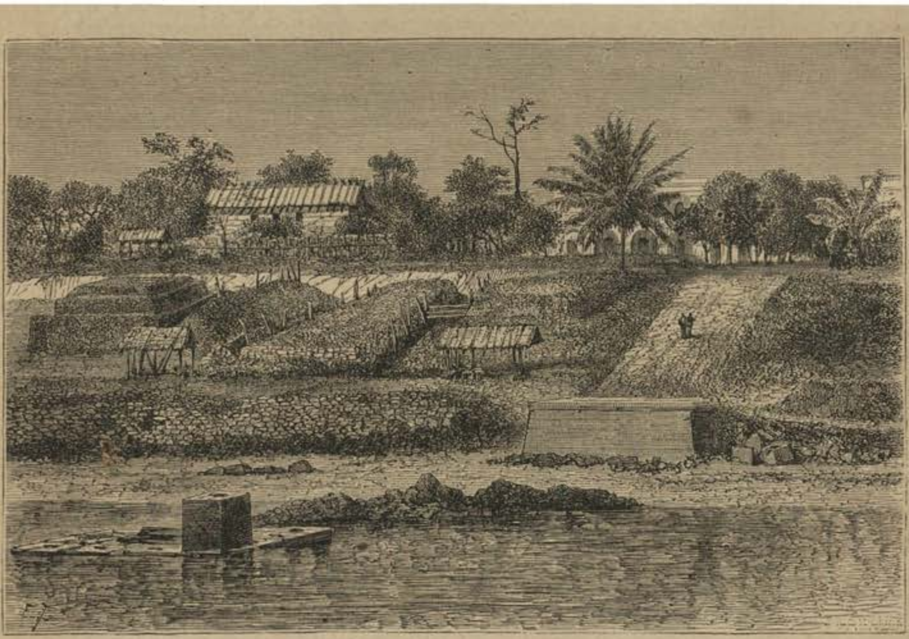
They also manufacture a native kind of beer from maize, or sometimes from rice, and the universal African palm wine is in common use.

Agriculture is at a low ebb, but even with the rude scratching which the ground undergoes the return is enormous. All the land is rented from the king, and when one piece of ground is exhausted another is cleared. Rotation of crops, or manuring, is entirely unknown. Cotton is not cultivated, but is collected from wild plants, and woven in a laboriously rude manner by the women. The king, however, allows no one to wear cloth of the patterns used in the royal robes. Architecture is at even a lower ebb. All the houses are of the "barn order," being little better than clumsy sheds. The different wives of an establishment usually live in separate houses, and the slaves in a quarter allotted to them. The rich men, as among civilised races, have usually town houses, and country villas on their plantations, where they reside part of their time. Drainage and all sanitary arrangements are at zero: the streets stink with all indescribable odours, and small-pox rages with dire rapidity at certain seasons.



ENGLISH TRADING SETTLEMENT AT THE GABOON.

Marriage is a most complicated ceremony among the Dahomeyans. Simplified, the *rationale* is as follows:—If a young man takes a fancy to a young woman he despatches some of his friends as ambassadors to the lady's father, laden with presents of rum and cowries. A council of the relatives is convened. If the suitor has offended any of them his offer is rejected. If inquiries are, on the contrary, satisfactory, Afa, the god of wisdom, is consulted; and it is generally noted that if the present has been sufficient, a favourable answer is given. If on the contrary, the presents are returned and the negotiations are at an end. The next stage is to pay for her, and the bridegroom, and all his relatives to boot, strain every effort to get together the requisite. Besides doing the betrothal, the bridegroom has to meet all the fetish charges to which the bride may be subject. These are not few; for if the fetish priests discover that they have a bleedable subject they are not backward in the discovery that some important sacrifice or ceremony essential to the happiness of the young couple has been neglected. The bride is then escorted by her friends and relatives to the future home. A great entertainment is given in the courtyard of the house; though during the entertainment the bridegroom is not allowed to see anything of his wife. The feasting continues to midnight, or even to cock-crow, after which the company retire, and the fetish priest leads the bride to her husband, accompanying the ceremony with many good advices to her and to him. "We have brought your wife," they say; "take her; flog her if she is bad, and cherish her if she is good." The health of "the happy couple" is then drunk, and they finally take their departure. After a week the bride returns to her father's house, and sends a present of cooked food to her husband, who returns the compliment by a gift of rum, cowries, and cloth. Next morning she returns to her husband's house, goes to market, purchases provisions, and prepares a feast, to which her husband's friends are alone invited. The honeymoon is now over, and the little wife subsides down into the prosaic life of a Dahomeyan matron. There are various other ceremonies, identical with those connected with the Jewish and Arabian and other marriages, which the reader can study for himself in the works quoted. They are curious, but of no very particular moment in a



CHARCOAL STORES AT THE GABOON.

work of this nature. A childless woman is looked upon as under the ban of Legba, and is considered as having lost caste. At one time the birth of twins was considered a sure sign of the infidelity of the wife. The infants were thrown into the water, and the mother impaled, and her breasts cut off, after the manner of the Chinese. This barbarous custom is now discontinued, and in the capital, as amongst us in a case of even greater fertility, the mother of twins receives a present from the king. The children are generally circumcised, not in infancy, but between fourteen and twenty years of age.

If a person dies the body must be inspected by the district magistrate, to prevent any one encroaching on the royal prerogative of taking life, as in former times masters were in the habit of killing slaves either for offences or as messengers to their ancestors. After elaborate mourning the body is burned under the floor of one of the deceased's dwelling-houses, unless there is a regular family place of sepulture. By the side of the corpse, in the coffin, are placed goods to enable him to pay his way on the long journey to the other land. Like the Chinese, the Dahomeyans have a great desire to be buried at home. If one dies at war his finger-nails and a small portion of the earth from his grave are brought to Dahomey, and the spot where they are interred is in future reverenced as the grave of the deceased."*

SHELL-MONEY.

In the course of our description of the Negro tribes we have had frequent occasion to speak of *cowries* as a medium of exchange. It is the shell-money so extensively used in Africa. It may, therefore, be convenient to conclude this chapter with some account of this malacological coin, and the use of shell-money generally.

When speaking of the North-Western American Indians, we had occasion to refer to the use of shell-money. But in what is now the Eastern United States shell-money was in use among the aboriginal tribes in early times. They probably receive the marine shells which form the medium of exchange from the tribes dwelling on the coast, in exchange for the interior products.

The Pilgrim Fathers of the Massachusetts' colony at Plymouth found the common "hard-shell clam," or *quahog* (*Venus mercenaria*), in use among the neighbouring Indians as an article of exchange. They made *wampum* from the dark-coloured or purple portion, while from the axis of a species of *Pyrula* or conch the "white *wampum*" was manufactured.† The settlers themselves used it. For instance, John Higginson, in 1671, had £160 voted him "in country produce," which he was glad to exchange for £120 solid cash. "Solid cash included beaver skins, black and white *wampum*, beads, and musket-balls, value one farthing." *Wampum* was also made of the whelk-shell (*Buccinum*).‡

The use of the *Dentalium* we have already referred to (vol. i. p. 52).§ In New Mexico the pearly ear-shell (*Haliotis rufesceus*), the common Californian "Abalone" is used as money. The Indians who resided in the vicinity of the old Russian settlement of Bodega, on the

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* Skertchly, pp. 441—502.

† Massachusetts Historical Society's Collections, vol. viii. (1802).

‡ Cadweller's "History of the Five Indian Nations," p. 34.

§ See also for Californian Indian money, Powers in *Overland Monthly*, vols. viii. to xi.

Northern Coast of California, used at one time to use pieces of a clam-shell (*Saxidomus aratus* Gld.) as money, and at one time *Olivella biplicata* and *Lucapina crenulata* were used for the same purpose. To return to the cowrie. It is the *Cypræa moneta* of naturalists, a native of the Indian Pacific waters. It is used as money by the natives of some parts of Hindostan, and is exported for barter with the West African tribes. In former time it was extensively used in Hindostan. Reeve mentions that "a gentleman residing at Cuttack, is said to have paid for the erection of his *bungalow* entirely in these cowries. The building cost about 4,000 *rupees sicca* (£400 sterling); and as sixty-four of these shells are equivalent in value to one *pice,* he paid for it with over 16,000,000 of these shells." Tons are annually sent out from Liverpool to the Coast of Africa for trading purposes, and used in the manner described.*

CHAPTER VII.

THE EGBAS AND TRIBES OF THE BONNY RIVER.

Before passing to the powerful and numerous tribes whose homes are on the Gaboon river, near the Southern boundary of the Gulf of Guinea, it may be well to glance, however, briefly at those whose designations head this chapter.

The Egbas have been long noted as the most determined enemies which the Dahomeyans possess, and indeed almost the only nationality which has dared to check the advances of that warlike people. They are a fine race, of a light black, the chiefs—as frequently happens among a savage people—being generally of a fairer hue than the common people. The men, though handsome in figure, are pre-eminently ugly; the women being equally ill-favoured, and wanting the redeeming quality which the symmetrical figures of the men supply. The hair of both sexes grows into little tufts, and in the case of the men is shaved into a variety of fanciful patterns, which give the Egba tonsure quite a geometrical aspect; the women divide it into ridges stretching from the nape of the neck to the forehead, and tease their crisp locks out to the fullest extent. Their skin is coarse and wrinkled, feeling, according to Burton, very little different from shagreen. The hands of the slaves look like the feet of fowls. Their skin is further disfigured—ornamented in their idea—by tattooing it with figures of tortoises, alligators, lizards, stars, concentric circles, and other fanciful devices. Each sub-tribe has generally some device peculiar to itself. When the son and heir of a man of wealth comes of age, he is allowed to do no menial task, and is further distinguished by having a gash with a knife drawn across his forehead, by which the skin is elevated into a ridge. Painful as the operation is, it is patiently submitted to as a great honour, and furthermore as a mark of a strong constitution, the torture being so great that not unfrequently even the stolid Negro succumbs to the pain. Both sexes wear ornaments about their necks, and on their wrists and arms, the number as well as the character of these ornaments pointing out to those skilled in African ceremonial the number and the names of the deities which the wearer is permitted to worship. Etiquette also reigns supreme among them, no less than fifteen forms of personal salutation being described by Captain Burton as being in use on different occasions or to different people. One may be given as an example. Supposing two men of about equal rank meet, both immediately squat upon the ground opposite to each other, and politely snap their fingers, according to the most approved code of etiquette provided for the occasion.

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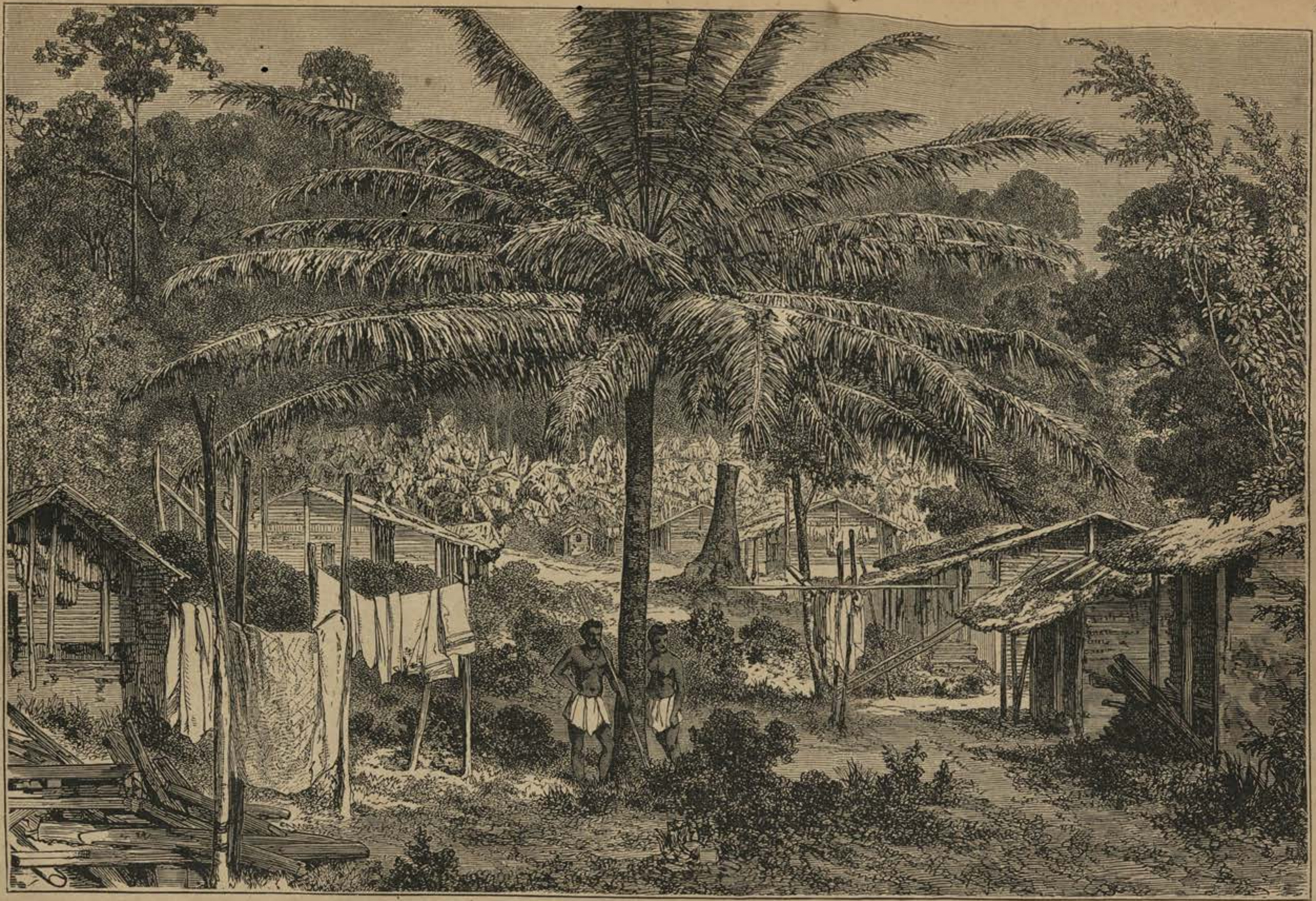
* See a paper by my friend, Mr. R. C. E. Stearns, of San Francisco, on "Aboriginal Shell-money" (*Overland Monthly*, September, 1873).

Their houses are of the usual conical style of African architecture, and are composed of "swish" walls and thatched roofs. When a house is to be built, all the friends of the householder *in futuro* assemble to give him assistance in rearing the structure, very much after the fashion of the backwoods "logging Bee" of America. The result is not very striking, except in the small amount of work which is accomplished by the multiplied labour of the assistants. To use the words of Captain Burton, the Egbas divide the labour so much that the remainder is imperceptible.

The *capital of the Egbas* is Abeokuta, or, as the name signifies, "Understone," in allusion to the rock on which it is built. It is rudely fortified, after an aboriginal plan, with mud walls, defended by a few almost useless guns, and a shallow moat. The whole affair would scarcely act as a temporary check to a European army, though presenting a barrier before which the army of Dahomey and Ibadan—against whose attacks they are chiefly built—has before now sustained a severe repulse. The city itself is about four miles in length, and about two in breadth. Its natural strength lies not in its walls, but in its position on the rock from which it derives its name. The streets are narrow, crooked, and dirty, as most African towns, where the pig and the vulture form the only scavengers. Markets are held in shady places, even under the palace walls; and every fifth day a larger one than ordinary, distinguished by the special name of "Shekpon," or "the bachelors' good," because on that special day so many people—and, we may reasonably suppose, so many unmarried young persons of the opposite sex are idling about—that the single men have no difficulty in getting some one to bring them water and food, sweep out their house, and generally "put them to rights."

"The houses," writes Burton, "are of tempered mud—the sun-dried brick of Tuta and Nupè is here unknown—covered with little flying roofs of thatch, which burn with exemplary speed. At each angle there is a 'hobbi'—a high, sharp gable of an elevation—to throw off the heavy rain. The form of the building is a gloomy little square, totally unlike the circular huts of the Krumen and Kaffirs. It resembles the 'utum' of the Arabs, which, extending to Usaraga and Unyavyembe, in Central Inter-tropical Africa, produces the 'tembe," and which, through the 'patio' of Spain, found its way into remote Galway. There are courts within courts for the various sub-divisions of the polygamous family, and here also sheep and goats are staked down. The sexes eat alone. Every wife is a 'free dealer,' consequently there is little more unity than in a nunnery. In each patio there is usually some central erection, intended as a storehouse. In these central courts the various doors, about four feet wide, open through a verandah or piazza, where, chimneys being unknown, the fire is built, and where the inmates sleep on mats spread under the piazza, or in the rooms, as the fancy takes them. Cooking also is performed in the open air, as the coarse earthen pots scattered over the surface prove. The rooms, which number from two to twenty in a house, are windowless, and purposely kept dark,



A GABOON VILLAGE.

to keep out the sun's glare. They vary from ten to fifteen feet in length, and from seven to eight in breadth. The furniture is simple: rude cots and settles, earthern pots and coarse plates, grass bags for cloth and cowries, and almost invariably weapons, especially an old musket and its leathern case for ammunition. The number of inhabitants may vary from ten to five hundred, and often more in the largest. There is generally but one large outer door, with charms suspended over it."

Abeokuta has of late years become famous, chiefly owing to the signally disastrous defeat which the Dahomeyans, under King Gelee, suffered under its walls in March, 1851. In this attack fourteen or fifteen thousand Dahomeyan male soldiers, and a large number of Amazons were engaged. Both parties fought with great ferocity, though little skill. The victory ended with the Egbas, who lost in the conflict only about forty killed and 100 wounded, while the Dahomeyans left on the ground 5,000 killed, and some 1,500 prisoners in the hands of the enemy, besides many of the wives and sisters of the king, his velvets, corals, and other highly valued treasures. From that day to this the defeat has rankled in the minds of the Dahomeyans, without however stimulating them to risk another attack.

In another section of the world Abeokuta has become familiar, owing to the attempts to introduce Christianity into the Egba tribes from this city as a centre. Though the mission has been so far successful that the colonial hierarchy can number one native of Abeokuta among its number—viz., Ajai, or as he is better known, "The Right Reverend Dr. Samuel Crowther, Lord Bishop of the Niger"—the results, as a rule, have not been so signally happy as to call for any special remark. The African nature is woefully unimpressible. It can mimic the forms and language of Christianity, but can rarely get imbued with its spirit. Once let the influence of the teacher be removed, and the visible signs of the creed, which his monkey-like nature delights in emulating, be taken from before them, and the African is apt to return unto his idols, and the gross idolatry which is more suited to his rude mind than the more refined and ennobling influences of a higher creed. We need not, therefore, be surprised to learn that though Christianity has been partially established in Abeokuta, superstition and paganism of the direst form still maintains almost unbroken sway.

Human sacrifice is still kept up, and when a great man dies slaves are slain to act as his attendants in the land of spirits. Messengers are also dispatched to the dead in the same way. A slave or a prisoner taken in war is richly dressed, laden with cowries, and when intoxicated with rum is slain. In this manner it is believed that not only the messages, but the circulating medium with which he is laden, can be conveyed to the departed relatives of the people who have performed this pious sacrifice. Paganism as it exists among the Egbas, does not widely differ from the fetishism of the rest of West Africa. The religion of the Egbas is, however, in one respect different from that of the neighbouring tribes, in so far that it is directed, and in a manner controlled, by the mystical society known as "Ogbòni," which in some respects corresponds to the religious or priestly corporation which we had occasion to describe when treating of the North-west Americans. What the real rights of the Ogboni are no one can exactly tell. This we know, that it partakes of a semi-religious, semi-political character, and that novices can be initiated into the rites, even if of tender years, provided they are of good repute and free-born Egbas. Wondrous mystery surrounds their rites, which are performed in a special house or temple dedicated to them, and ornamented on the outside with all manner of mystical symbols and hideous figures, tending to overawe and astonish the ignorant and superstitious. Accounts, more or less circumstantial, such as that those who are received into the order must kneel down and drink a mixture of blood and water from a hole in the floor, &c., have been published; but as the truth of these narratives is just as firmly contradicted by those whose interest it is to conceal their rites, it would be an idle waste of space to burden our pages with any *résumé* of such descriptions. To reveal them is death, and considering that there is little temptation to do so, those curious in Ogboni ceremonial must remain perforce ignorant of what it would indeed not be a great amount of wisdom to know. Their gods are numerous, and divided into a greater and a smaller class. They also deify the departed great, who, however, never reach to a higher state in the Egba Pantheon than that of the minor gods. Nearly all of these gods have certain attributes and controlling powers, and are distinguished by particular symbols. Take for instance Shango, the god of thunder and lightning. If lightning strikes a house it is believed that Shango has thrown one of his stones, and wishes to inflict dire revenge on the devoted building. Accordingly, on this happening, the priest of Shango, followed by a mob of idlers and worshippers, rush into the house and plunder it of everything portable, in honour of the deity and for their own behoof. Shango is symbolised by a wooden bat, and, because the god during his lifetime on earth was fond of plundering, his worshippers carry about with them a leathern bag, by aid of which, and the good example of the deity inspiring them, they endeavour to imitate his predatory propensities as closely as possible.

Ipa is another of their great deities, and has a special secret society, composed of males alone, devoted to his worship and the celebration of his rites. He is symbolised by a palm-fruit with four holes, and near the dwellings of his priests are planted sacred palm-trees. The chief priest lives a distance from Abeokuta, and near his dwelling, which is in a mountain, is planted a palm-tree with sixteen boughs, which are said to have been produced from the sixteen palm-nuts planted by the sixteen founders of the Egba kingdom. Sixteen is with them seemingly a sacred and mystical number. Thus, for instance, when the Egbas are meditating war, the war priest throws into the air sixteen cowries. Those which fall with the opening upwards portend peace; but if a greater number fall with their openings downward, then the divination is supposed to be favourable to war.

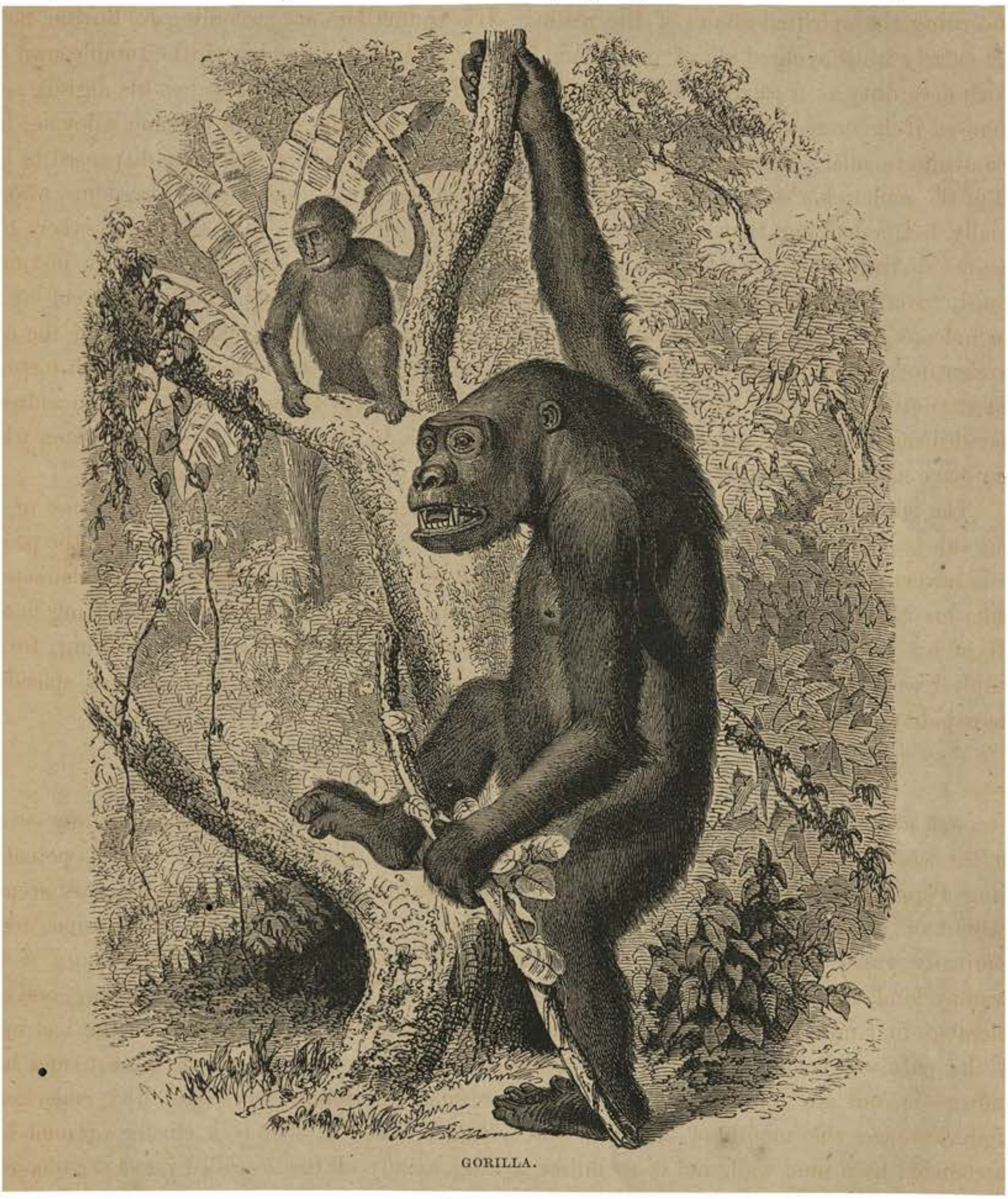
Egugun and Oro are deities who act as correctors of human morals; they are semi-human, and have no sinecure office. In reality they are personated by some one or other of the accomplices of the fetish men, when their services are required to frighten any one—chiefly women—into a sense of their evil doings. When the voice of Oro is heard the women must keep inside the houses, while the males welcome him with dancing, tumbling, speech-making, and street processions, the Ogboni temple being meanwhile filled with worshippers, praising the deity, and talking that interminable talk which is so widely known in Africa as a "palaver." Now is the time when all who have committed any offence against the Egba code of morality are taken to task and punished. Meanwhile the women shut up together spend their time in quarrelling and noise, while the streets are filled with the clamorous followers of the god—the whole scene, in its utter confusion, superstition, fanaticism, and noise, being thoroughly characteristic of a Negro town.

The king of the Egbas is known by the family title or surname of Alake, and though a personage of great distinction in his ebony realm, is yet by no means an absolute despot, being controlled by his counsellors, a kind of "chamber" or "parliament"—the *Balé*—and finally by the Ogboni, who have to be consulted on all important questions, more particularly those concerning the spiritual affairs of the realm. His councillors are, according to Burton, not a particularly well-favoured set of gentlemen. They sit in the verandah of the tumbledown hut which does duty as a palace, waiting the behests of their lord, who considers his dignity compromised if he does not keep a visitor waiting an unreasonable length of time, allowing him meanwhile to solace himself with the royal gin and water which is sparingly dispensed to him out of the monarch's cellar. These councillors, unlike the great men of most kingdoms, who are usually better-looking than the plebeians, are absolutely more hideous than any others of a race not distinguished for good looks. "Their skulls," writes the energetic traveller just mentioned, "were depressed in front, and projecting cocoa-nut-like behind. The absence of beards, the hideous lines and wrinkles that seared and furrowed the external parchment, and the cold, unrelenting cruelty of their physiognomy in repose, suggested the idea of the eunuch torturers erst so common in Asia. One was sure that for pity or mercy it would be as well to address a wounded mandril. The atrocities which these ancients have witnessed, and the passion which they have acquired for horrors, must have set the mark of the beast upon their brows."

The office of king is not a hereditary one, the monarch being selected from one of the four sub-tribes which make up the Egba nation; and though he is thus entitled by the people, he is nevertheless a sufficiently powerful individual, with enough of despotism in his character to make his rule entirely unpleasant to those under him. Take, for instance the following fact:—All of his nobles sitting in the ante-chamber are miserably clad and poor-looking, for the simple reason, that should they be weak enough to exhibit any signs of wealth or splendour, the cupidity of the monarch would speedily deprive them of it.

BONNY.

Ask any fo'c's'le man who has cruised along "the West Coast," or, at random, any seaman on the wharves at Liverpool or Bristol, if he knows the Bonny river, or its sable potentate, King Peppel, and the chances are that you will speedily get a full, free, if not very accurate account of the nature, resources, and general habits of the people of the insalubrious region nominally ruled by the monarch aforesaid. The account will not be flattering: a low, swampy land, intersected by the river of that name—a vile stew of fever and disease, and only tolerable in times past because it supplied slaves, and nowadays because it is the metropolis of the palm-oil trade. King Pepper, Peppel, or Pimento—for by all of these names he is known—is not an amiable personage. He resides at Bonny Town—a filthy collection of piggeries near the mouth of the river—in a palace which is merely a cluster of mud huts, surrounded by a mud wall, and is as unlike a king as any of the so-called regal personages so contemptibly familiar to the palm-oil traders are. His character will scarcely bear investigation. Poisoning, and murder of every type and degree, have, among other minor crimes, been attributed, and not without good reason, to this Negro ruler. Yet Peppel is a travelled man. He has visited England, where he created some trifling sensation; has had poems (*sic*) addressed to him—and there is even a "poet laureate" to his majesty: for a time he even abandoned (outwardly, at least) some of his most objectionable habits, such as a dish of boy's palms; and took to drinking champagne instead of trade rum. He talked of establishing a consul in London, and went so far as to ask a large sum to establish a mission station in his dominions; became "teetotal," and so secured the sympathy of some well-meaning if rather credulous people. He even, by dint of specious talk, persuaded a farmer, a lady's-maid, and a few other people of like-mindedness, to accompany him to Africa, promising them (Peppel was always profuse in promises; lies cost him nothing, and came natural to him) lofty rank and princely salaries in his magnificent court.



GORILLA.

Their disappointment was ludicrous in the extreme. "The farmer found," writes Mr.

Reade, "that it was not easy to cultivate black mud upon which one could not walk without sinking up to the waist; the lady's-maid made a plant upon Peppel which provoked the jealousy of the queen. As for the people who were to receive royal salaries and apartments in the palace, they were presented each with a couple of yams, Peppel declaring that the state of his exchequer would admit of no larger disbursements." Yet he is possessed of a large income—some say £15,000 a-year—derived from his percentage on the palm-oil trade, and on the various 'dashes' or presents which he receives from traders and others for the sake of his goodwill, albeit that is a possession of a character not sufficiently valuable to make any one very proud. In fact, the palm-oil king, true to the Negro character, soon relapsed again into barbarism, and the description which is given of him bears out the character which Peppel maintains of being possessed of more wealth and showing less than any other African potentate. A traveller who visited him grows facetious over the condition in which he found the once pet of the Liverpool old ladies (of both sexes), and the sad relapse 'dear King Peppel' had suffered since he had once more taken root in his native soil. In one of the mud-huts composing the 'palace' the monarch was seated, 'and the scene was well suited to the muse of his poet laureate.' The Africans have a taste for crockery-ware, much resembling that of the last generation, for old china, and a predilection for dog-flesh, which is bred expressly for the table, and exposed for sale in the public markets. And there sat Peppel, who had lived so long in England; behind him a pile of willow-pattern crockery, before him a calabash of dog stew and palaver sauce. It is always thus with these savages. The instinct inherited from their forefathers will ever triumph over a sprinkling of foreign reason. Their intellects have a *rete mucosum* as well as their skins. As soon as they return to their own country they take off all their civilisation and their clothes, and let body and mind go naked. . . . A certain skill in mechanics, without the genius of invention; a great fluency of language, without energy in ideas; a correct ear for music, without a capacity for composition —in a word, a display of imitative faculties, with an utter barrenness of creative power—there is your Negro at the best. Even these are rare, almost exceptional cases; and to show such trained animals as fair samples of the Negro is to make an exhibition of black lies. One might almost as well assert, after the sights which one sees at a country fair, that all pigs are learned; that the hare plays on a drum in its native state; and that it is the nature of piebald horses to rotate in a circle to the sound of a brass band."*

So much for an African palm-oil potentate. Yet Peppel is not without pride—a kingly kind of dignity—and instantly feigned deafness when his friend the Scotch surgeon of a palm-oil trader complimented him on having "grown just as fat as an old sow!"—a gentler hint of his displeasure than might have emanated from his royal brothers in a more northern latitude! Peppel's power is almost nominal, the kingdom being governed—so far as government is needed—by four regents, between whom and the king proper there may be before long a struggle for supreme power. Many of the minor sovereigns in the neighbouring territories have infinitely more power to do mischief than he; and, from the energy they display in trade, may before long surpass him in wealth. His eldest son and heir was educated in England, and, like his worthy sire, was a great tea-party and mission-meeting pet. Whether he has yet relapsed into barbarism I have not been able to learn. At all events, it is only a matter of time. A few years does not very much matter to his present biographer.

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* Reade, "Savage Africa," pp. 28, 58.

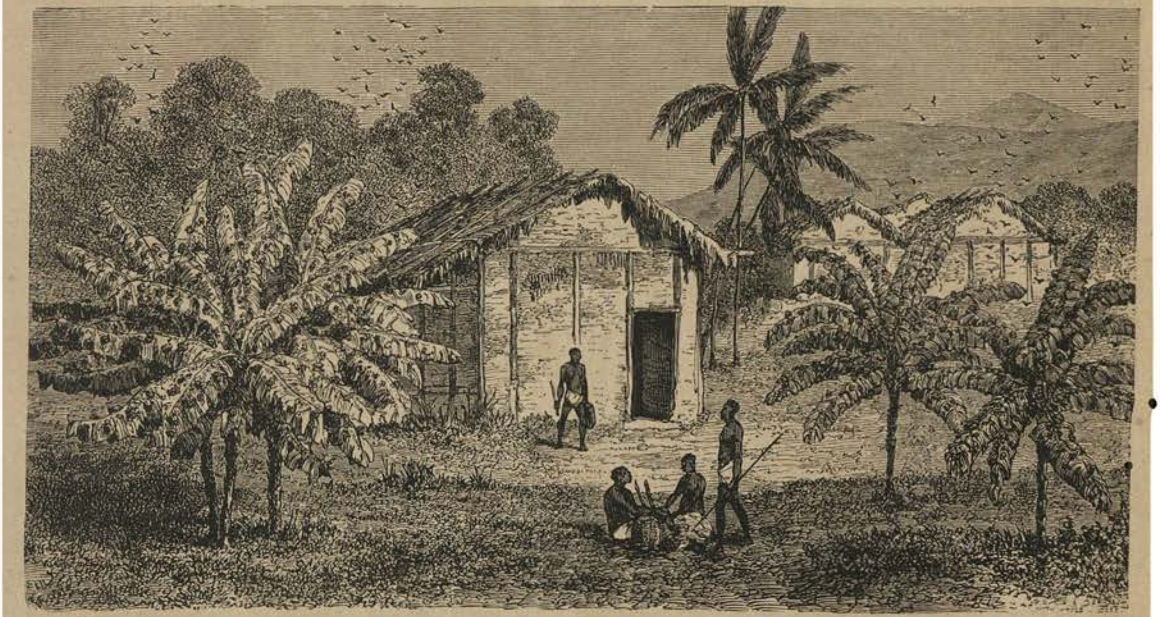
After the example of such a king, it would—all other considerations apart—be hopeless to expect a very enlightened people. Slave-traders', followed by palm-oil traders' teachings are not calculated to educate a people upon the most enlightened European model. Accordingly, the morality of the Bonny River is just about on a par with its salubrity—never very high at the best, and at certain seasons, when trade is brisk and rum plentiful, very bad indeed.

The houses are built of mud, and are high-roofed and high-gabled. There are usually three apartments in the better kind of dwellings, in addition to a private chapel or "ju-ju house," and an abundance of passages and other vacant spaces in which their limited ideas of architecture are sufficiently displayed by the Bonny builders. The threshold, in order to prevent the entrance of wild animals, is more than eighteen inches high, but if any one step over when the master is in it is thought that he will be bewitched. Such a breach of etiquette is therefore avoided by wise men, mindful of the value of life and of etiquette. The *ju-ju* is the household god or charm which protects the inmates, and may consist of almost anything—a scrap of paper, a pair of braces, an old wellington-boot, or a jack-knife. In the middle of the village is a great or common ju-ju house—a rude, roofless, oblong structure, forty or fifty feet in length. At the far end is a kind of altar protected by a roof. Under this roof are placed a row of skulls, each skull being generally painted a different colour. This ju-ju house is a sacred place—a kind of cathedral church—and, like similar edifices in European countries, is used as a burying-place for the Bonny kings.

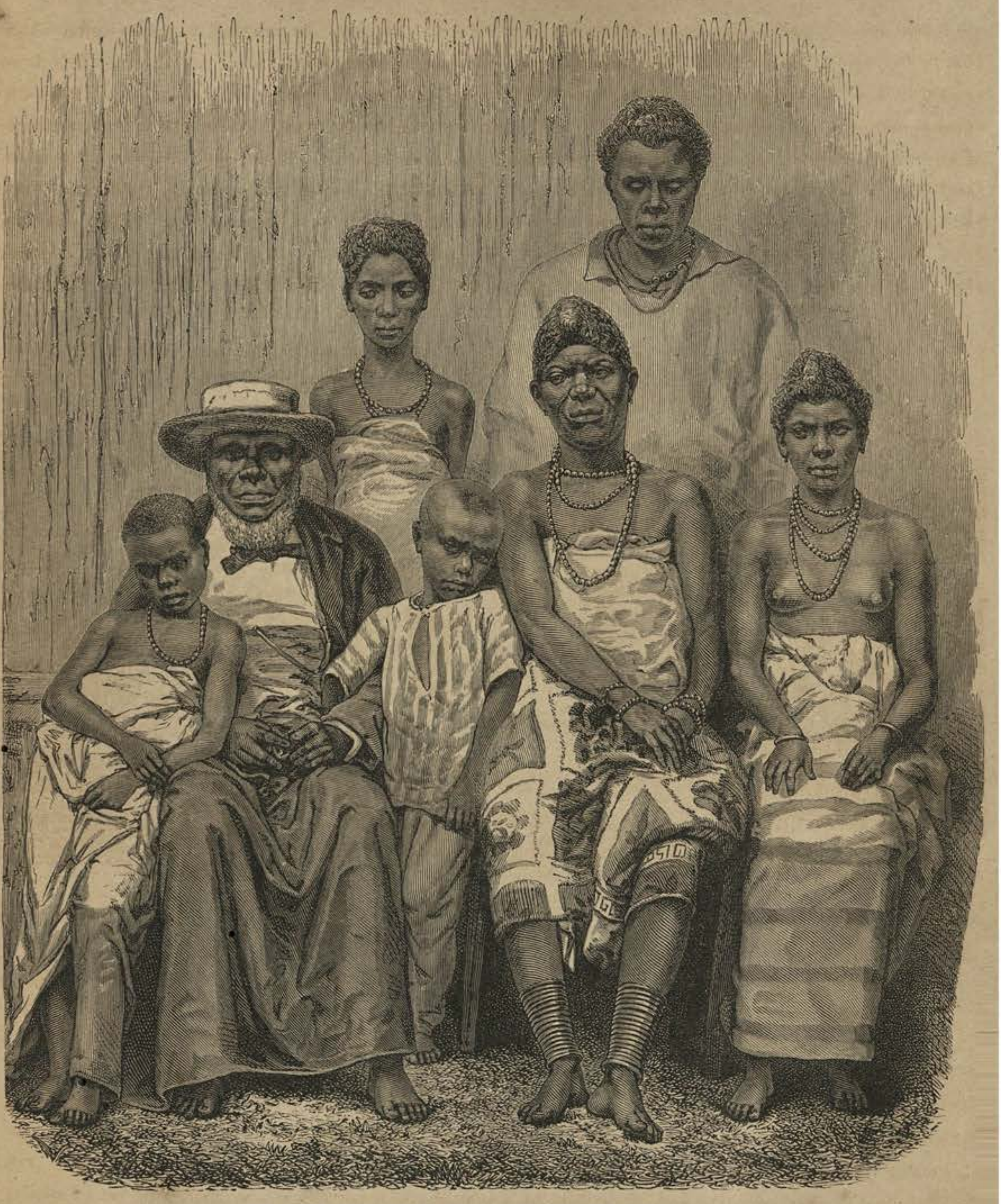
The character of the people is cruel in the extreme—blood, death, and cruelty seeming to be absolute pleasure to them. Prisoners taken in war, and even children, are sometimes eaten by the victors, though it must not be supposed that cannibalism at any time formed a marked feature in their domestic economy; and it is now fast disappearing. Abundance of horrible tales are related by the traders in reference to the Bonny taste for the practice of anthropophagism; and though there may be a grain or two of truth in these, yet the experience of similar tales elsewhere leads us to receive with caution the reckless statements of men little accustomed to weigh evidence, and only too apt to believe that all savage people indulge in the human subject, just as the African Negroes who have come but little in contact with the white man believe him addicted to similar practices. Still, after weeding the Bonny character of all such exaggerated tales, enough remains to convince us that their nationality is one of the least pleasant to be found in Africa, where all are so bad. The women are the only hard workers in the whole nation; the men pass their time in bargaining for the palm-oil, eating, drinking rum, "sponging" on board the ships, and in sleeping.

Religion they can be scarcely said to possess, beyond a belief in particular demons—half human, half satanic. Chief of these is the famous Mumbo Jumbo—"Mumbo Jumbo in the Mountains of the Moon," as Bon Gaultier, with that geographical license accorded to the poet, assigns it a habitation.

Entering any Bonny village the traveller will notice a peculiar dress hanging on a tree. It is simply a bark sack, with holes for the head and feet, and two holes for putting the arms through. Beside the dress is placed a scarlet-painted mask made of a gourd, with holes for the eyes and mouth, and surmounted by a tuft of feathers. He may be puzzled to understand what this is for, until, in the midst of some village merriment some night, a subdued cry of terror is heard, and a feigned attempt at joy on the part of the population. In a short time a figure approaches, dressed in the garb which he had seen hanging to the tree, and followed by a number of attendants bearing sticks. This is the famous Mumbo Jumbo. Everybody, however terrified they may be—and terrified they assuredly are—pretends to be delighted at his approach, even though their conscience tortures them as to whom his wrath is to descend on. They are not kept long in suspense. Mumbo Jumbo touches a trembling woman. Instantly she is seized and tied to a post, when the stick-bearing attendants soundly belabour her. Every one, and the woman herself best of all, knows that the punishment is inflicted on her as a return for her insubordination at home, her incorrigible conduct, and the general "incompatibility of temper" which she has displayed in her intercourse with her husband. Her husband has borne it as long as he could, and, having exhausted every method of cure, as a last resource he, or one of his friends, has donned the Mumbo Jumbo dress, and inflicted this public punishment, amid the unsympathising men and the jeering women—who, true to their nature, are only too glad to see one of their sex in trouble. Every one knows perfectly well the *rationale* of Mumbo Jumbo, yet they find it convenient to look upon him as a superhuman personage—a stretch of belief which their superstitious, shallow minds find no difficulty in accommodating themselves to. On the whole the institution of Mumbo Jumbo is not only a harmless one (except to the person chiefly concerned, and even then it is intended for her good), but even a useful one. Cynics have not been wanting in suggestions that, divested of some of its more savage surroundings, and polished up a little, it might be usefully transplanted to Europe, there to take the place of the



FETISH BANANA TREES.



THE CHIEF KRINGER OF THE GABOON AND HIS FAMILY.

departed "branks," "ducking-stool," and other instruments of discipline at one time greatly in favour for the "taming of a shrew."

What their other superstitions—and of a darker shade—are, it is, as usual, when an attempt is made to investigate the religious beliefs of a savage, difficult to get at. Cruelty and vileness of every type are the prevailing characteristics of the rude fetishism, or *gree-greeism,* which here, as elsewhere in West Africa, forms the substratum of their religion, or religious superstition—call it which you please. There is a fetish for everything—a fetish against your enemy, a fetish powerful to protect the owner (and, it need not be added, the *purchaser*) against witchcraft, a fetish which secures the possessor against fever, as well as the evil eye—in a word, a fetish for every place, for everybody, for everything, and, it may be added, of everything, under the African sun. The fetish priests, however "hedge" their charms carefully round with certain conditions. The purchaser must take only a certain kind of food while the charm is working its spell; he must implicitly believe in it; he must do this, and carefully avoid that; and so on. The result is that it is almost impossible for any man to strictly obey the conditions imposed on him. But that is the fetish-*ee's* not the fetish-*er's* business; on his own head be the result of the breaking of the conditions, the fetish priest is free from blame; and the reader, who by this time is not unacquainted with the nature of the African ecclesiastic, need not be assured that he is thoroughly alive to the facilities which such a mode of procedure affords him to escape from the consequences which would otherwise fall upon him should the fetish fail.

Need we say anything more about Bonny? I think not. It would be wearisome beyond the instruction likely to be conveyed to detail any more of their habits and customs. They are only a paraphrase of similar and equally disagreeable ones found elsewhere along the pestilent African shore. Equally would an account of the petty tribes in the vicinity be but little interesting, as they are only minor editions of the Bonny folks. At intervals the newspapers will have informed their readers regarding their endless petty squabbles, their massacres of each other, and their continual attempts to blow up each other's village by means of the huge quantities of powder stored there, and which constitutes nowadays the bulk of the wealth of these West African kinglets. Oko Jumbo and Ja-ja—for such are the euphonious names of two of the chief of these monarchs—may yet, for all we know to the contrary,

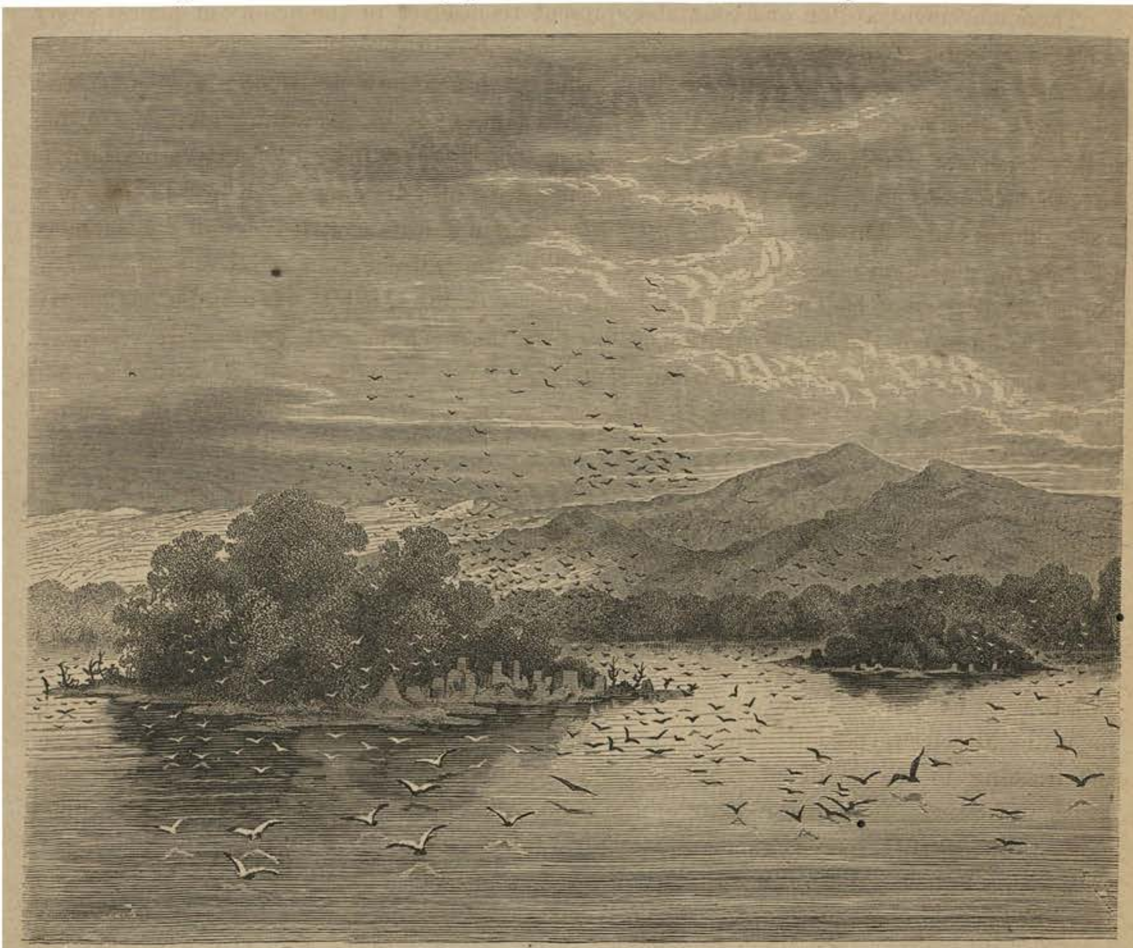
> "——— Shriek and sweat in pigmy wars
> Before the stony face of Time."

Nor, I believe, does anybody particularly care!

CHAPTER VIII.

THE GABOON TRIBES.

LEAVING the Bonny river, which is one of the numerous mouths by which the deadly waters of the Niger pour themselves into the Gulf of Guinea, we skirt the shores of the Bight of Biafra. Sailing along, we pass the mouth of the Old Calabar river, and many other pestilential streams, oozing its way through fetid mangrove swamps redolent of fever—once the locality where the slaver pursued his trade, but now noted only as a place where palm-oil is to be got—until we come to the Gaboon river. Here we propose to halt for a while. The Gaboon is one of the largest rivers of this region, and, like all the rest of them, is chiefly valuable as the highway by which the natives from the interior bear their palm-oil to the coast. The trade in ivory, gold, or any other products—ebony among others—is now entirely subordinate to the commerce in the yellow oleaginous substance familiar to most people as the lubricant of railway-carriage wheels, though less generally known to be the basis of many highly-scented pomades with most aristocratic French names. It is obtained from the fruits of two species of palm (*Elais Guineensis* and *E. melanococca*). In appearance it is solid and butter-like, of a rich orange-yellow colour, and, in addition to the uses already indicated, is much employed in the manufacture of soap, candles, &c. By the natives of Africa it is used as food, while the "spathes" or sheaths which cover the flowers, yield, on being wounded, a juice which, when fermented, is known as palm-wine or toddy. In 1868 upwards of 900,000 cwt., valued at £1,800,000, were imported into Great Britain. The whole of the shore of the Gulf of Guinea is the scene of this oleaginous commerce, and the natives of the Gaboon are among the chief tribes who supply the trading ships with it. In the Gaboon country is also found the gorilla—that huge, man-like (?) ape which has been a *causa belli* in scientific, and especially in pseudo-scientific, circles of late years (p. 117). The tribes inhabiting these regions have therefore been described somewhat more fully and accurately than those of most other parts of the coast, the proximity of the French and English factories and the American missions also aiding in this, though it is indeed wonderful how little information the unintelligent traders, who have resided for years in a country, possess regarding the natives with whom they come in contact daily. The rich vegetation and pleasant scenery of the Gaboon is generally very pleasing to the voyager just landed, and whose first view of the bare stinted treeless African coast has so unfavourably impressed him with the country he is to cast his lot in for some time. A longer acquaintance is apt to disgust him. The rich vegetation conceals in the shade deadly miasma, and is fostered by seven months of rain, during four of which there is little better than a deluge. The heat is not high for a country lying so near the tropics (lat. 30′ N.), but it is *constant*, and this, combined with the electrical tension of the air and the continuous moisture, renders the climate almost intolerable. During the winter months this becomes worse. To use the language of an intelligent French writer, to whom we are indebted for many of our facts, Dr. Griffon du Bellay—"There the wearied body grows depressed, without being able to find repose in a state of inactivity, or renewal of its strength in sleep; the mind becomes dull and heavy, and the appetite fails. Sickness assumes no violent or aggravated forms; dysentery and sunstroke are rare; but malarious fevers are rife, for the country is very marshy, and every one alike becomes sensible of the feeling of languidness for which he can hardly account, with its accompaniments of pain without obvious cause, and a sense of weariness which he cannot shake off. A country like this has, of course, a temporary attraction for the traveller in search of curiosities, or to the naturalist who is an ardent lover of the treasures obtained with so much labour for science; but the European who is not absolutely forced to do so does not tarry long. He encamps there, but does not settle; nor do I believe that he has any chance of acclimatising himself. Certain missionaries have no doubt dwelt there for some time; but their regular and quasi-monastic life (although I will not deny that they have to undergo fatigue) exposes them less to a direct struggle with the climate than is constantly supported by the sailor who is tied to a laborious service, or the trader resolved by the force of his own energy to secure the favours of fortune. In any case, the European who can be acclimatised must be an exception. The race cannot find there a permanent settlement, for the climate is not fitted at all for the white woman. Any woman who would hazard in this country the perils of maternity would attempt what would certainly prove fatal to herself, and surely lead in the end to the extermination of her race." With a very few exceptions the same description may apply to the whole of the inter-tropical West African coast.



SACRED ISLES OF THE IONANGA.

The tribes of the country are numerous, but they may be all classed under four general heads or groups—nationalities would be too lofty a term to apply to them. These are:—(1) The M'pongwés, who live on the sea-coast at the entrance of the rivers; (2) the Shekianis—*boulous*, or men of the woods, whose home is in the forest-lands of the surrounding regions; (3) the Bakalais; and (4) the Fans, or Pahouns, whose cannibalistic reputation has of late years brought them prominently into notice.

All of these tribes must have originally come from a distance. They are not the aborigines of the Gaboon district, but most probably have advanced from the interior to the coast. The Fans, for instance, only made their appearance a few years ago, driving the Bakalais—who originally possessed that part of the country they now inhabit—before them. In time they will dispossess, or at least commingle with, the M'pongwés or Gaboonese proper, as their passion for colonisation and the power to oust the original inhabitants are two very well-marked characteristics of this otherwise not particularly amiable people.

These movements, often unaccountable, present themselves in the history of almost every people, savage and civilised; but in the case of the Gaboon tribes, the coast-wise migration is apparently due to a desire to share in the substantial benefits which a closer intercourse with the whites who are only settled on the coast or who visit it in their ships affords. Owing to this tendency of inland tribes to migrate from the interior, the ethnologist is enabled to study the manners and customs of people whom he might otherwise never reach, or at least only catch glimpses of. On the other hand, continual communication with the whites has tended not only to deteriorate morals never very high by the introduction of vices exotic to the aboriginal category of bad manners, but to alter their customs, habits, even modes of thought. They have forgotten the old occupations and rites; their religious observances are corrupted, if not abandoned, and, as Dr. du Bellay remarks, by inter-marriage with other tribes their original stamp has even been altered. Let us now say a few words about each of the great tribes we have named.

M'PONGWÉS.

A lazy race—a nation of middle-men, who conduct long haggling bargains with the palm-oil traders—who, in their own opinion, were formed for something higher than work, which the good God only intended for white men and Krumen (of whom more anon)—whose canoes are their only mode of communication, the beach their only highway—must be the character assigned to the M'pongwés, who make up the bulk of the Gaboon population.

Dress is not one of his weaknesses. The climate effectually checks this piece of original sin in the M'pongwé bosom. The women wear a pair of cotton drawers, tied round the waist and reaching to the middle of the legs—and nothing more (figure on p. 105). On great occasions, however, they may indulge in a piece of cloth thrown over the shoulders, and falling nearly to the ground, but such an extravagant wardrobe is not often in use. The young girls walk with a light elastic step, but the married women move heavily, owing to the load of copper bracelets on their legs and copper rings on their toes. So many bracelets are worn on the legs that they look as if encased in metal boots (figure on p. 121). The men never dream of carrying anything, but march alongside their heavily-laden women, smoking their pipes, and leisurely hailing the passers-by with the salute of "M'bolo," unconscious that he is guilty, in European eyes at least, of anything unmannerly. Their appearance has been thus described by Lestrille:*—"The M'pongwé is, generally speaking, tall and well-proportioned. His developed muscles betoken great strength. The leg is better formed than is usually the case among the blacks; the foot is flat, but the instep is arched; the hand is small, and well set on; the shoulder too short in proportion to the fore-arm; the eyes are generally fine and expressive; the nose is small and flattened; the mouth moderately large; the lower lip is thick without being pendent; the teeth are generally fine and regular. The prognathous form is very rare. Their colour is bronzed rather than black. The growth of hair is comparatively luxuriant. The greater number shave a portion of the head in various patterns, and most of them are altogether without beard; and lastly, their chests are large and well developed. The women are generally little, their feet small and delicately made; their hands especially are often elegantly shaped. Men and women go naked to the waist. The women ornament their necks with rows of pearls, and display much taste in the assortment of colours. To their necklaces are fastened little charms more or less valuable; often, too, the principal wife, she who is the actual mistress in her husband's hut, suspends to it the keys of his strong box. Finally, they wear immense earrings, which are made for them in Europe after an invariable pattern, with copper bracelets, and rings not only on their fingers, but also on their great toes."

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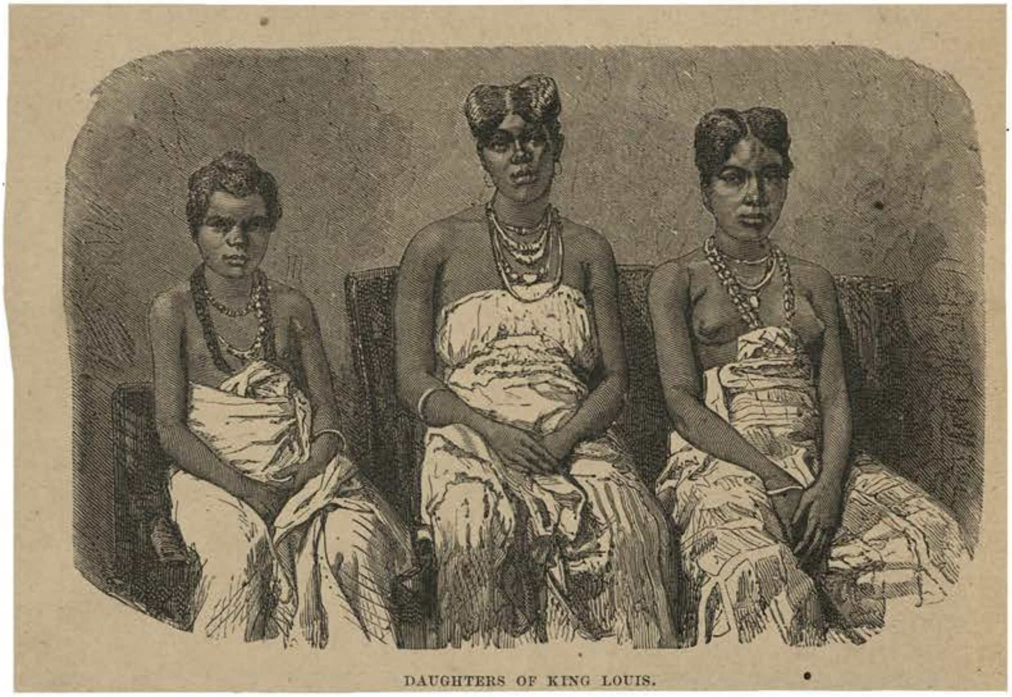
* "Revue Coloniale," 1856.

Their village is formed of two long rows of houses, shaded by immense trees, and backed by a cultivated ground, in which bananas, manios, and the papaw trees are cultivated. "Canoes drawn up on the shore, nets made of the fibre of pine-apple leaves drying in the sun, a few heaps of red wood and some logs of ebony awaiting the arrival of a vessel, a few half-fed fowls, picking up a scanty meal in the streets"—such is the picture of a sleepy M'pongwé village. It is a drowsy land, with a sparse population, limited facilities for locomotion, and a people inclined to avail themselves of those which do exist only to that extent necessary to obtain a livelihood (p. 113).

Every M'pongwé, in addition to his home in the coast village—in other words, his "town-house"—has also a country residence back in the woods, round which is his plantation farm, or what the Jamaica negro calls his "provision ground." Filthy in his person, his house does not shame the owner, it is generally far from cleanly. The furniture consists chiefly of empty boxes—for, like the Egba, he has a great idea of having receptacles for property which *is to be*—couches made of the palm-tree, chairs, European crockery, and some odds and ends. If a visitor enters one of their huts he is politely received, and motioned into the seat of the master of the house, which he has vacated in honour of the guest. If, however, it is a chief who is visited, no such courtesy need be expected. Such a dignitary knows his own position much too well. He simply sits still, extends one hand to the visitor, while with the other he strokes the foot, which is doubled under him Turkish fashion. If a native approaches a chief, he is expected to bow lowly to the ground, and otherwise demean himself, as is proper in the presence of such an august personage. If he further invites the visitor to take his place by his side, it is looked upon as such a mark of condescension that no right-thinking man—as right thinking goes in M'pongwé-land—would ever dream of not making a present to mark such affability on the part of the chief. "Any European article," writes Dr. du Bellay, "will please his negro majesty. A few pipes of tobacco will completely overcome him; and for a bottle of brandy he will sell his family. But if the master of the dwelling, or, in his absence, his 'chief wife' (the one to whom he was first married), shows signs of friendship, these emotions are not shared by the other inmates. Grouped in the centre of the hut, seated round the family fireplace, they do not disturb themselves. This hearth is a fixture. Three or four logs of wood serve to cook the food, fill the hut with a perpetual smoke, which helps to clear it of mosquitoes; dry some pieces of skin, which are hung in a corner; and cure the remains of flesh and fish. Whether the weather be hot or cold, this hearth is the centre of attraction to the family. By his side two or three women, with pipes in their mouths, pick bananas, clean yams, prepare manioc, or scrape the long leaves of the pine-apple to obtain their fibres; others rub their copper rings and bracelets with citron juice; others comb and dress the hair of some negress, who lies stretched at full length on the ground, with her head resting on the knees of her maid. In the centre of all these women the negro children tumble head-over-heels among the cinders on the hearth. Such is a picture of their home-life. These people are never disturbed by comers and goers; the hair-dresser is, above all, immovable. It is not by any means a small matter to arrange the head-dress of a Gabooneese; the greater part of the day must be devoted to the work; but when the towering structure has once been raised, cemented, and sprinkled over with a compound red powder, which contains, among its other ingredients, leaves of the vanilla, a toilet has been accomplished which lasts for at least a fortnight." The varieties of hair-dresssing adopted are too numerous to describe. The portraits of the daughters of "King Louis," on the next page, will illustrate a not uncommon mode.

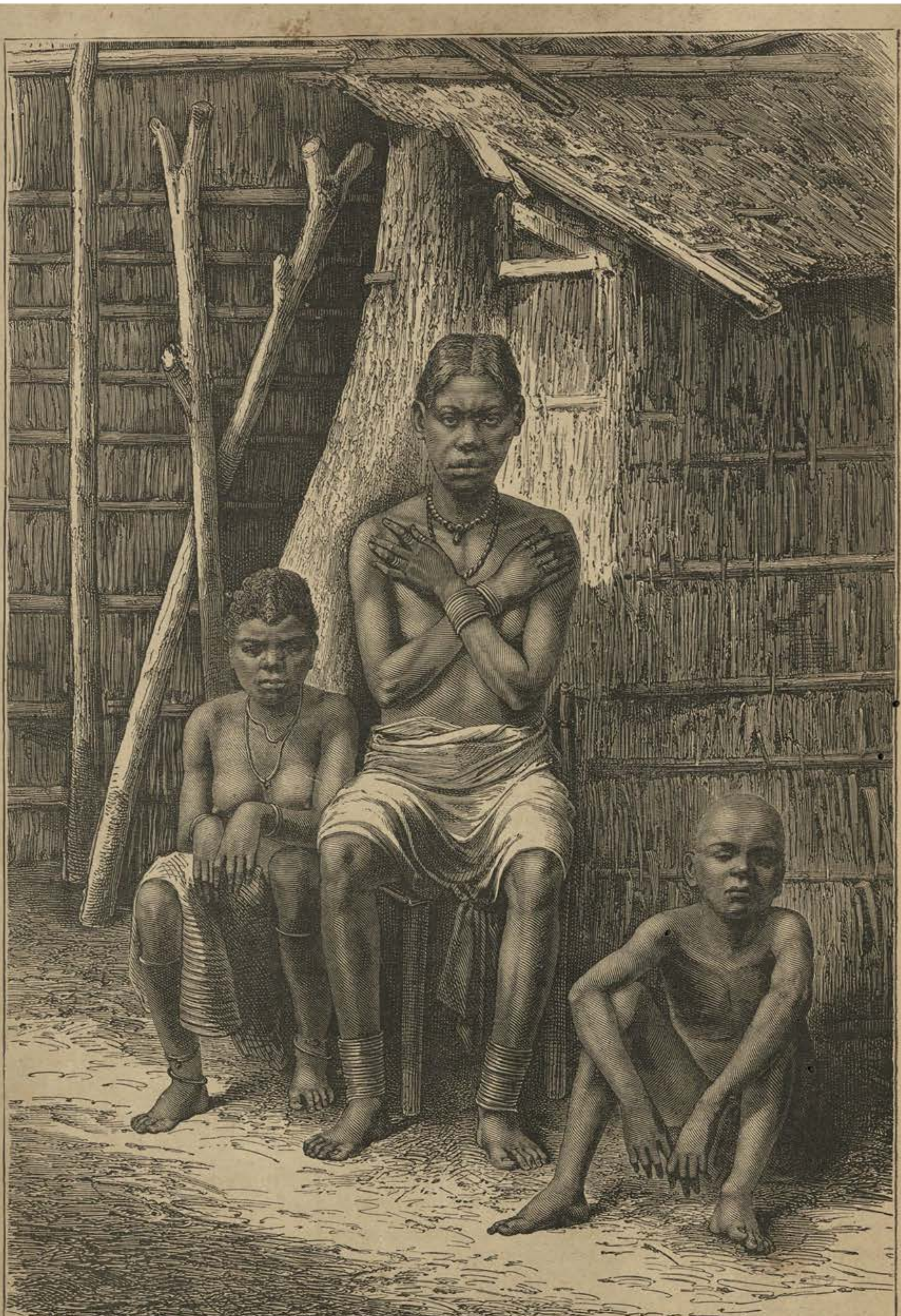
Polygamy prevails on the Gaboon to the full extent. Every chief at least has a perfect harem; while there are few men who have not more than one wife. They are frequently married at ten, are mothers at fourteen, and are old women at twenty. This is one of the causes of polygamy. The women come to have children at such an early age, owing to their early marriages, that if a man is to have a large family—an honour he is very emulous of—he must increase his matrimonial stock. Another cause may be found in the fact that, unlike what prevails in other parts of the world, there is a great disparity of the sexes in the Gaboon country, five female children being born to three males.

Wives are—as the reader will have already known is almost universally the case amongst savage people—bought from their parents. Frequently the bargain is concluded while the future wife is a mere child, and she is either allowed to remain at home with her parents, or put under the tutelage of her future husband's head wife, whose task is to teach her the duties of a M'pongwé matron. If the father is very obdurate in the bargain for his daughter, then resort is had to a fetish, or philtre, to enable the suitor by its magical aid to effect an easier "trade." A leguminous plant called "Odépou," bears the reputation, not only of rendering the voices of singers melodious, but also of being powerful at softening the hearts of lucre-loving fathers-in-law! Curiously enough, the custom which prevails among various savage tribes of prohibiting marriages of consanguinity, also obtains among the M'pongwés, to the extent that no one is allowed to marry in his own village, but must go to a distance to seek a wife. By marriage a man strengthens his connections, and a father-in-law is, accordingly, looked upon as a rather valuable piece of property to be possessed by a pushing young man. When a man disposes of his daughter to another, he is obliged to give his father-in-law, in exchange for the household drudge he has deprived him of, his own sister to wife! The lot of the women is the lot of all savage females—treated like a favourite dog as long as she is young and good-looking, though liable to be ill-used on the smallest provocation, but when old and ugly reduced to be a simple slave to whom every menial task falls, and receiving none of the kind words which, in more civilised life, the remembrance of youthful affection would engender, even when all physical charms were gone. But her husband never had affection for her; she was bought, she was used, and now she is treated as a useless piece of property. Any little affection he has he reserves for palm-oil, rum, and copper bracelets. When the husband goes from home, he locks up in his house such of his wives as he does not choose to take with him. True, a bamboo-walled prison is not very difficult to break through; but so accustomed are the wretched women to subjection, that they do not seem to think they are deprived of anything to which they are entitled, and simply sit down to sleep away their enforced leisure until their lord returns. The wife is not, however, altogether helpless. If she is ill-used she can complain to the village chief, and seek redress from him, or she can take refuge with her parents, who will not surrender her unless the husband promises better behaviour in future, and makes a present, in the shape of indemnity, not to the injured wife, but to the father-in-law. Still more extraordinary, custom allows the wife a "cicisbeo," "conguié," or "cavalier servente," who is protected by public opinion, and whom the husband—powerless to prevent this unauthorised rival—is obliged to tolerate.



DAUGHTERS OF KING LOUIS.

The first married wife is the head of a Gabooneese establishment; the other wives are entirely under her control; and if she is a business woman she will generally have the direction of the agricultural operations at the husband's provision ground and country-house back in the bush. A husband may have no affection for his wife, just as a man may have no affection for his horse. But it is rarely that a man, however brutal his nature, will ill-use the latter to its injury; it is too valuable a piece of property to be wantonly spoilt. So it is with a M'pongwé wife. She also is valuable property, and ought accordingly to be taken care of. If he takes credit at a factory he puts his wife in pawn as a pledge that he will pay for what he has obtained. Again, if he fancies himself cheated by another native, he takes the first opportunity he can of capturing one of his wives and holding her in safe keeping, knowing



BAKALAIS WOMAN AND CHILDREN.

that with such a valuable pledge at stake the chances are that the owner of it will begin to see the error of his ways more quickly than by any mere argument or suasion, moral or physical, of any sort. "Again, in every domestic quarrel," writes the author we have more than once quoted, "in every complaint brought before a native chief or a French authority, it is sure to be found that in some way or another a woman is at the bottom of the whole matter. Either she has been stolen in her capacity as valuable merchandise, or, with or without reason, she has become dissatisfied with her husband, and has taken refuge in her parents' house; or, perhaps, she has been forcibly carried off. Heaven knows what perpetual discussions, what endless disturbances, arise out of these conjugal squabbles. A case of seduction is the most serious. If the delinquent is convicted, he is obliged to make reparation, and sometimes to submit to corporeal chastisement. Occasionally the offender is a stranger, and in that case he takes refuge in his own village. He seldom, however, goes alone, and, as a consequence, war is lighted up. I saw one day, by the banks of the Dgo-wai, one of these gallants. He was a fine fellow, with an olive complexion and very soft eyes, a Negro of the least marked type; in a word, a very presentable hero of romance. Unfortunately, there was a slight blot, which somewhat spoilt his adventure. He had not been satisfied with carrying off his "Helen," but he had carried off the husband's furniture in his canoe at the same time. The latter pursued him, captured him, and tied him to a post. There he remained for many days, meditating, no doubt, upon the inconveniences which are sometimes connected with the pursuit of gallantry. At last he was obliged to pay a very considerable ransom, with the alternative of being sold for a slave for the benefit of the husband. As for the lady, she was expiating her fault in a neighbouring hut, with her head shaved, her feet fastened to an enormous beam, and subjected, no doubt, from time to time, to proper conjugal correction."*

The occupations we have already indicated, combined with gossiping-visits, fishing on a small scale, the cultivation of the ground, the collection of india-rubber in the woods, the trade in elephants' tusks, red-wood and ebony, with the villages of other tribes who live in the region which produces them, and all with just the minimum amount of fatigue necessary to perform these tasks. Fishing, though carried on with nets, was some years ago accomplished by means of poison thrown into the water, which intoxicated the fish without at the same time rendering them inedible. A similar method of fishing is adopted by many savage people in various portions of the world, and it is even at this day practised in some parts of Europe—the Levant, for instance, where a shell-fish is the material employed to intoxicate the fishes. At the Gaboon it is the leaves of a pretty leguminous plant, with yellow flowers, cultivated by them and trained on their houses—and known to them as "Onono"—which is used. Dr. Du Bellay is of belief that this plant has been brought with them when they migrated from the interior, as it is not indigenous to the Gaboon. So rapid is the poison that if a handful of the bruised leaves are thrown into a pool, the fish will almost immediately die and come to the surface. It can, however, only be used with effect in pools, but not in the sea or in rapid flowing rivers, the poison getting too soon diffused to be of sufficient activity. Accordingly, it is now almost entirely abandoned for the use of nets. The M'pongwé is not himself a producer or even a trader on his own account. He is simply a middleman who conducts operations between the European and the inland tribes, exacting an unmerciful percentage for this self-imposed task. The interior tribes do not care to come in contact with the European traders, the coast tribes, who produce almost nothing, inspiring them with a dread of the white. These interior tribes in their turn perform a similar part with the still more interior ones, until an elephant's tusk arrives on the coast enormously enhanced in value by the continual commissions which have to be paid by and to the different middlemen, through whose hands it has to pass. This system is the bane of trade in the West Coast of Africa, and results in rearing up a most unblushing set of liars and rogues in the shape of these "mediators" themselves. The captains of vessels who conduct their own business, and have no time to put off, are the chief victims of the M'pongwé's knavery; the traders at the factories, being able to purchase more at leisure, are not so apt to be imposed on.

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* "Cassell's Illustrated Travels," edited by H. W. Bates; vol. i., p. 297.

The system of credit is in full operation in this region. A trading captain gives out a certain amount of goods on credit, his debtors agreeing to supply cargo for it on his return trip. On coming back he finds only part of the ivory, ebony, red-wood, or palm-oil ready. The rest he is told is out in the interior on its way to the coast. Day after day he awaits, until in the pestilential river his health fails, his crew gets stricken down with fever, "the ship is eating her head off with expenses," and the winter is coming on, when it is dangerous to remain on such an unprotected coast; but still never a stick of ebony, never a gallon of palm-oil goes into the hold. He is simply in the power of the natives, and they know they can soon tire him out. And they do. Finding his crew dead or dying, and he himself scarcely capable of mixing his daily rations of brandy and water, he deserts the river, preferring to sacrifice his goods rather than stay any longer at the terrible risks he is undergoing. Yet the rascally M'pongwé does not grow rich. To do so would require too long and too continued an exertion; he merely manages to live tolerably well for a little while, or if he chooses to invest his ill-gotten gains in wives and slaves, then he indulges in a little more rum and a good deal more of sleep, and takes his ease after the manner of an aboriginal grandee. Slavery is one of the M'pongwé institutions, but it is generally of a mild type, and the slaves merely assist their masters with the duties of his house and trade. The distance between master and man is thus not so wide as in ordinary cases. To be the slave of a mulatto is, however, accounted very degrading: no one would be so without losing his status in servile society. Slaves are generally far from badly treated, but still they are occasionally, when their master suspects them of witchcraft or poisoning. The offspring of a slave woman and a M'pongwé father is looked upon with suspicion, and the man who can boast of a line of ancestors all freemen, and uncontaminated with slaves' blood, is an aristocrat of the first water: but there are few families who establish such a claim, though—tradition being their only records—not a few make pretensions to it.

If a M'pongwé woman becomes a widow, she must shave her hair and go about with as few garments as bare decency will permit, and on a similar occasion a man must also shave his head and divest himself entirely of even his limited raiment until the days of mourning are over.

The system of *government* at the Gaboon is that every village is ruled by a chief, who of course *more Africano* assumes, or is given, the title of "king;" but who, though he exercises considerable authority, and is treated with great respect, governs more by moral suasion than by force. The chieftainship is not hereditary, though the candidates for election are always selected from "royal" families. The day of election is one of great turbulence and excitement, the adherents of rival candidates not unfrequently coming to blows. After a chief is elected he is treated with due honour, and in general implicitly obeyed. However, before taking office, his subjects remind him of his humble origin, and of the means by which he was elevated to his present position, by administering to him a sound beating with sticks. It is the last opportunity they will have of demonstrating the power of the democracy; and they delight in showing the man, whom to-morrow they will obey, that to-day, at least, they are his masters.

After the king elect has taken the vows of obedience from his future subjects, his "coronation robes and crown" are brought out. The robes usually consist of an old dressing-gown, unless a beadle's coat can be procured, when it is preferred. The "crown" is invariably an old silk hat, of the type known as the "chimney-pot," which with great dignity is placed upon the monarch's woolly head. It is, however, only two or three of the so-called "kings" who have any real power. The others are little better than nominal; and now that the French and English traders are exerting much influence, the power of the chief is rapidly on the wane. On p. 97 (Plate IV.) we present the portrait of King Dennis, who is, or was (for at the time of writing he was an old man) the principal chief of the Gaboon. Like many of the monarchs of the region, he can speak French, English, Portuguese, a little Spanish, and most of the aboriginal dialects, and has transactions with all the Gaboon traders, by whom he is held in great respect. He even received the Cross of the Legion of Honour from the late Emperor of the French, and the Pope has rewarded his zeal on behalf of the Catholic mission by a like decoration; while the appreciation of his character has been shown by the English in the shape of a medal, and several gorgeous suits of uniform, in which he by turns arrays himself. Long accustomed to European habits, and naturally a man of much dignity, he comports himself quite as becometh a king, and by the natives is looked upon with profound respect; a respect, as much due to his influence and wardrobe-wealth, as to his great age. At one time the slave trade greatly enriched this man. That source of profit gone, he is now very poor—except in dresses—is partially a pensioner of the French Government, and is daily seeing his race decrease around him.

The *religion* of the Gaboonese is, broadly speaking, the religion of the rest of the Palm-oil Coast—a rude belief in good and evil spirits, and an all-abounding confidence in the power of fetish. He has also a dread of the power which the souls of the dead can exert over the living. But fetish is the all-powerful preserver of life and property; it is called "moondah." For instance, a powerful moondah is the pinch of ashes formed from the incinerated brain of the leopard. The warrior carries it under his cotton drawers, and in battle grasps it nervously, confident in its power to give him courage. The fisherman's moondah is an elegantly-cut plate, which he attaches to his nets. But most powerful of all these talismans is the ashes from the burnt flesh or bones of a dead man. In war nothing can prevail against it. In addition to these amulets, or fetishes—which are not worshipped—the gods are represented by large figures in wood, fashioned, strangely enough, so far as their features are concerned, like Europeans—perhaps as a tribute to the superiority of the white man; but, again, it may be possible the object is to make them as ugly as possible, according to their ideas of ugliness (and the white man is the personification of it), in order to frighten the worshippers into obeying the deities more implicitly. In every village is a temple, or fetish hut, where the fetishes used for the public weal are kept, but they may be also sometimes seen in private dwellings. On fête days the idols are paraded through the village, followed by all the inhabitants, each person bedaubed with painted figures of the most grotesque character, and headed by the chief, wearing, as the symbol of his authority—or head of church and state—a long belt, fastened to the edge of his sleeve, before which sacred insignium every person humbly bows.

In addition to these kingly priests, there are male and female fetishists, or sorcerers, whose aid is invoked on all important occasions. Their procedure is much the same as that already described as practised by the fetishists of other tribes. In all their ceremonies the general idea is held that "a spirit dwells, or can dwell, in every object which can be seen, and not unfrequently a very mighty one in an insignificant object. This spirit is not bound unchangeably to this object, but has its usual or chief abode in it. The Negro, indeed, frequently separates the spirit from the sensible object which it inhabits; sometimes even he contrasts the one with the other, but most commonly he combines both to form a whole, and this is the fetish."*

All internal maladies are treated by the art of the fetishist, but for any external injury a Gaboonese will apply to a European surgeon. In this he is not illogical. External injuries—he knows how they are caused; but internal diseases are the work of demons, who can only be exorcised by the art of the fetishist. If a fetishist loses a patient, then he must protect himself under the plea that the dead man has been bewitched or poisoned. The next thing to be done is to find out who has been the guilty party. As it is absolutely necessary that somebody must be found guilty, this is generally not a very difficult matter. A slave is usually pitched on, as being a man whose death is of no particular moment to the community. As soon as the verdict is pronounced by the fetish man, the poisoner or sorcerer (as the case may be) is carried outside the village, and there disposed of. Death is the invariable punishment, the only variation being in the mode by which death is inflicted. Sometimes he is tied to a post, and then cut to pieces; at other times he is buried alive. We have hitherto been supposing that the guilty party has been a slave. If, however, he is a free man, then he cannot be convicted on the fetishman's evidence alone; he must previously submit to the ordeal. This ordeal, we have seen, exists in Madagascar; but it is on the coast of Guinea that it attains its full proportions and importance. The pretended sorcerer is made to drink the poison. If his stomach rejects it, then he is innocent; if, as more frequently happens, it acts fatally, then, of course, nothing more need be said about it. He *must be* guilty, and the proof and the punishment have come simultaneously. Perhaps the *sequitur* is not very clear, but African logic is never of the most brilliant type.

In the Gaboon country the plant used for the poison belongs to the order *Loganiaceæ*, the same family to which the *Strychnos nux-vomica*, out of which strychnine is manufactured, comes. As its actions are much the same as strychnine, the probabilities are that it is a close ally of that deadly plant.* It is known at the Gaboon by the name of *icaja,* and at Cape Lopez as *m'boundou.* It is in the bark and root that the active principle resides. The method of administering it is to scrape the bark until almost half a tumbler-full is obtained. This is then rapidly infused in about a pint of water, when the poison is ready for use. In one instance, recorded by M. du Chaillu, blood poured from the eyes and ears of the person who had drank it (an extraordinary symptom in strychnine poisoning), and death ensued in five minutes. Sometimes the fetishist will himself drink the poison. By this means he gains an immense reputation, and is supposed ever afterwards to possess the power of divination. It is believed, however, that when the fetishman himself drinks the poison, that either he prepares it of such strength that the stomach immediately rejects it, or that he possesses some antidote to it, for he is never known to be poisoned, and it is

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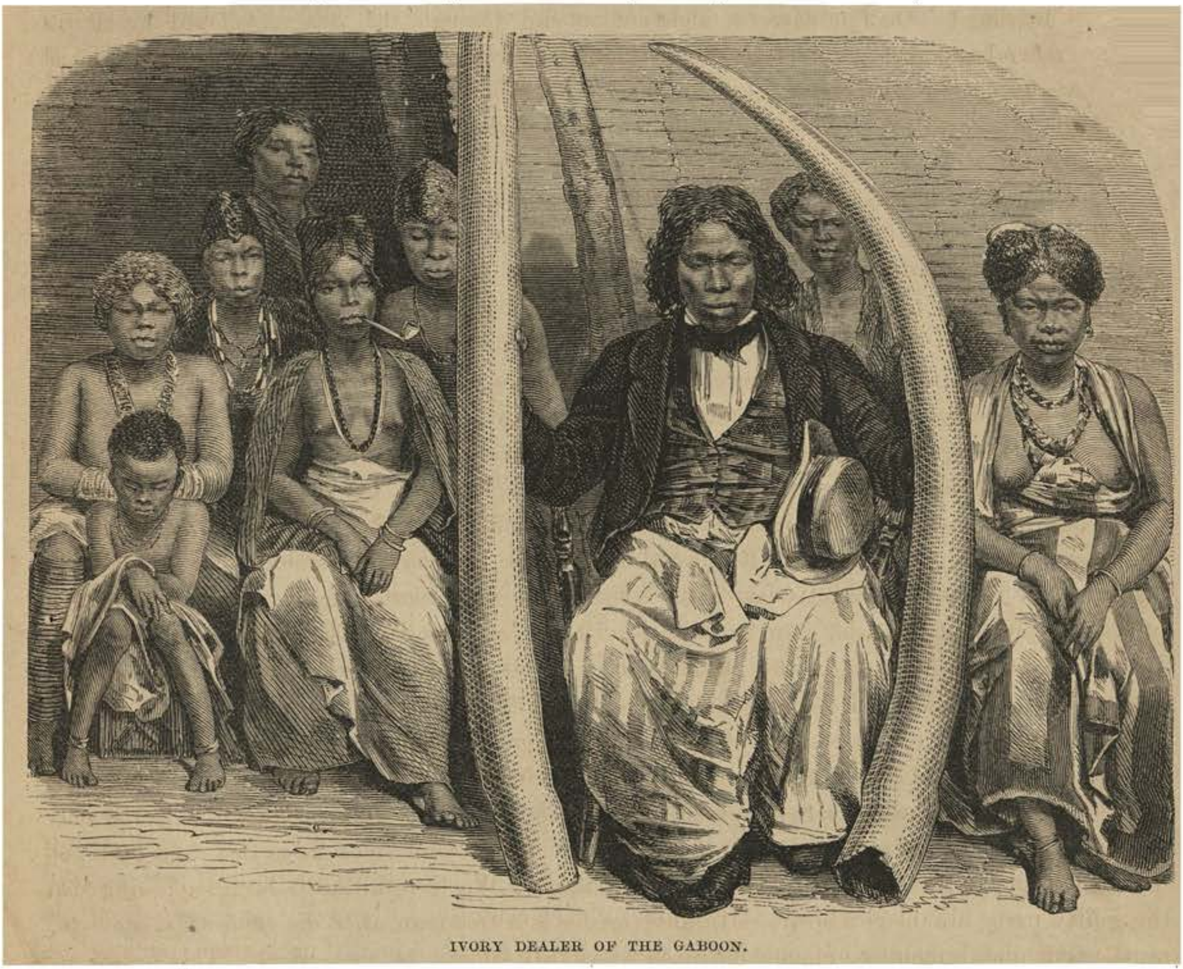
* Waitz, "Anthropologie," vol. ii., p. 174.



IVORY DEALER OF THE GABOON.

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* In this I follow M. du Bellay. We, however, know that one of the "doom barks" or "sassy barks" of West Africa is derived from the sassy tree (*Erythrophlæum Guineense, Don*) belonging to the bean and pea order (*Leguminosæ*).

scarcely likely that such cunning individuals would run any risks if they were not sure of the ground they were working on.

At the old Calabar river the well known "ordeal bean" is used in exactly the same way as m'boundou at the Gaboon. These "beans" are the seeds of *Physostigma venenosum.** Their action is a powerful sedative on the spinal nervous system. Of late years much has been written on this subject, and the bean, in the form of an extract, &c., is now introduced into the English pharmacopœia, as an application to cause contraction of the pupil of the eye. It has also been used in tetanus, and other nervous affections. We have already other indications of other plants being used as ordeals on other portions of the West Coast; and it is probable that in one form or another these ordeals, or judicial tests of poisoning, are in operation over the greater portion of Africa. When the Roman Catholic missionaries take away from the Gaboon native his fetish, and give him a holy relic, he generally finds that sooner or later it is returned, with the remark that "the missionary's fetish is very good for the white man, but it was not intended for the poor black." He has looked upon it simply as a fetish; and finding that it did not protect him from the ills he expected it would, or grant him the good he looked for from it, he not unreasonably considers it a gift of no value to him. Moving in the same line of reasoning, he cannot believe that the good God, who has given factories, rum, ships, and innumerable trade muskets, and scarlet pocket-handkerchiefs to the white man, can be also the God of the black man, who has to purchase all these things at so dear a rate from the more favoured being. He also considers that the black man's God takes little interest in white men, and that a fetish, which would be all-powerful in the hands of a Negro, would be valueless to the white man. Thus he consoles himself. The white man's God may have favoured him greatly, and given him much material property; but the black man has revealed to him certain mysteries unfathomable to the white man, and in which he of the pale face can never be a sharer. "Such then," writes M. du Bellay—and with his conclusions we will end this section—"such then are the blacks; I mean the better sort of them. Civilise them as much as you will, and develop their good qualities, but if you do not withdraw them from the influence of their race, your real success will, I fear, be but small. They will become little better, after all, than what many of them are already—children of nature, gentle and good, simple-minded, endowed with moderate inventive powers, imitative to a very great extent, capable of devoted attachment, and brave at times; but the old Negro nature lives, and will ever live, under the black skin, and you must not be astonished if one day he escapes from you, and under the influence of some dark superstition, reveals himself in his true and natural colours: shows himself, in fact, to be plainly—what in reality he has never ceased to be—trustful as a child, and equally cruel."

SHEKIANI.

The Shekiani, Chekiani, or Bontons, occupy a tract of country lying between the Muni and Gaboon rivers. They are, like all these West African tribes, divided into numerous sub-tribes (M'bousha, M'boundemo, M'becho, &c.). A Shekiani village consists of a double row of oblong houses set end to end, each house being about twelve or fifteen feet long, and eight to ten wide. They have no windows, and only one door. These villages are generally built in the midst of thorn-brakes, and on the crests of hills, and to render them further impregnable the ends of the street are blockaded at night, so as to prevent all egress or entrance. The houses are built of bamboo poles tied together with the stems of a climbing vine. Each house is divided usually into two apartments, one reserved for sleeping, the other for eating. As is commonly the case in Africa, each wife has a separate apartment to herself, with a door opening into the general eating or sitting room, so that any stranger acquainted with this custom can at once tell by the number of doors how many wives the head of the house has.

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* For an interesting account of the manner in which it is employed as an ordeal, see the various papers on the subject in different periodicals, by Dr. Thomas R. Fraser, and Prof. Balfour, "Trans. Royal Society of Edinburgh," vol. xxii., p. 310.

Their villages are governed by chiefs, who, however, possess but little power, though still influential in settling disputes, their advice being listened to with respect. They are great traders, and not unskilful elephant hunters, when it is considered that rude trade muskets, costing seven shillings and sixpence apiece, are the only weapons used.

The *character* of the Shekianis is far from good. They bear the reputation of being quarrelsome, passionate, revengeful, and careless of inflicting pain and death. They will sometimes subject their wives to the most diabolical torture. A case is related by M. du Chaillu, in which a chief tied one of his wives up to a stage, fastening her limbs with narrow cords, and then, by means of a "wrack pin," tightening them until they cut into the poor woman's flesh. On the explorer remonstrating at this abominable cruelty, which gave the shrieking victim the most excruciating torture, the cruel scoundrel released her, and made her sympathiser a present of her. In another instance, a sorcerer, or pretended practiser of witchcraft, was tied to a tree-stump, and then hacked to pieces, and his brains thrown into the neighbouring river, under the direction of the fetishman. To gash the body, and then rub pepper into the wounds, is thought a great piece of ingenuity by these inhuman fiends.

The *religion* of the Gaboonese does not differ materially from that of the neighbouring tribes. A curious belief, which, so far as I have been able to learn, is peculiar to them, prevails, that on the seventh day after the birth of a child, the nurse who waits on the mother will be possessed of an evil spirit which will turn her into an owl or some other animal. Accordingly, as evil spirits cannot bear the sound of any joyousness or merriment, the young girls of the village assemble on that evening to dance, and so outwit the bad spirit in its machinations.

Epilepsy is looked upon as the sign of a man being taken possession of by some such powerful evil spirits, which the skill of the necromancers and fetishmen is powerless to expel. He is not, however, to be allowed to recover without an effort. For days, accordingly, the most hideous noise is kept up by the fetishman and his friends. If he recovers in due course, then the fetish has been powerful; if not, the evil spirit has prevailed. The chances are, however, that the man, driven crazy by the hideous noise, will escape to the forest a raving lunatic.

Another series of stories hinge upon men turning by enchantment into gorillas, and ever afterwards haunting the village, killing the men, and carrying off the women to the jungle. They look upon this huge ape as not very distantly allied to them. In our perhaps prejudiced minds, the distance between the two is so little, that the transformation from man to gorilla might have been dispensed with, and the realities of the tale equally well preserved.

A people so cruel can scarcely be expected to be very courageous. Nor are they. Indeed, the same may be stated in regard to the whole of the Gaboonese. The French, who possess the largest settlement there, and exercise the rights of sovereignty, indeed, keep up a small garrison of black soldiers, and a battalion of Senegal riflemen, backed by a few guns. But, for all the risk there is of the natives ever attempting to dispute the Gubernatorial authority, the garrison might, as M. du Bellay remarks, be reduced to the dimensions of that which Bauchamont found in olden times at Notre Dame de la Garde—

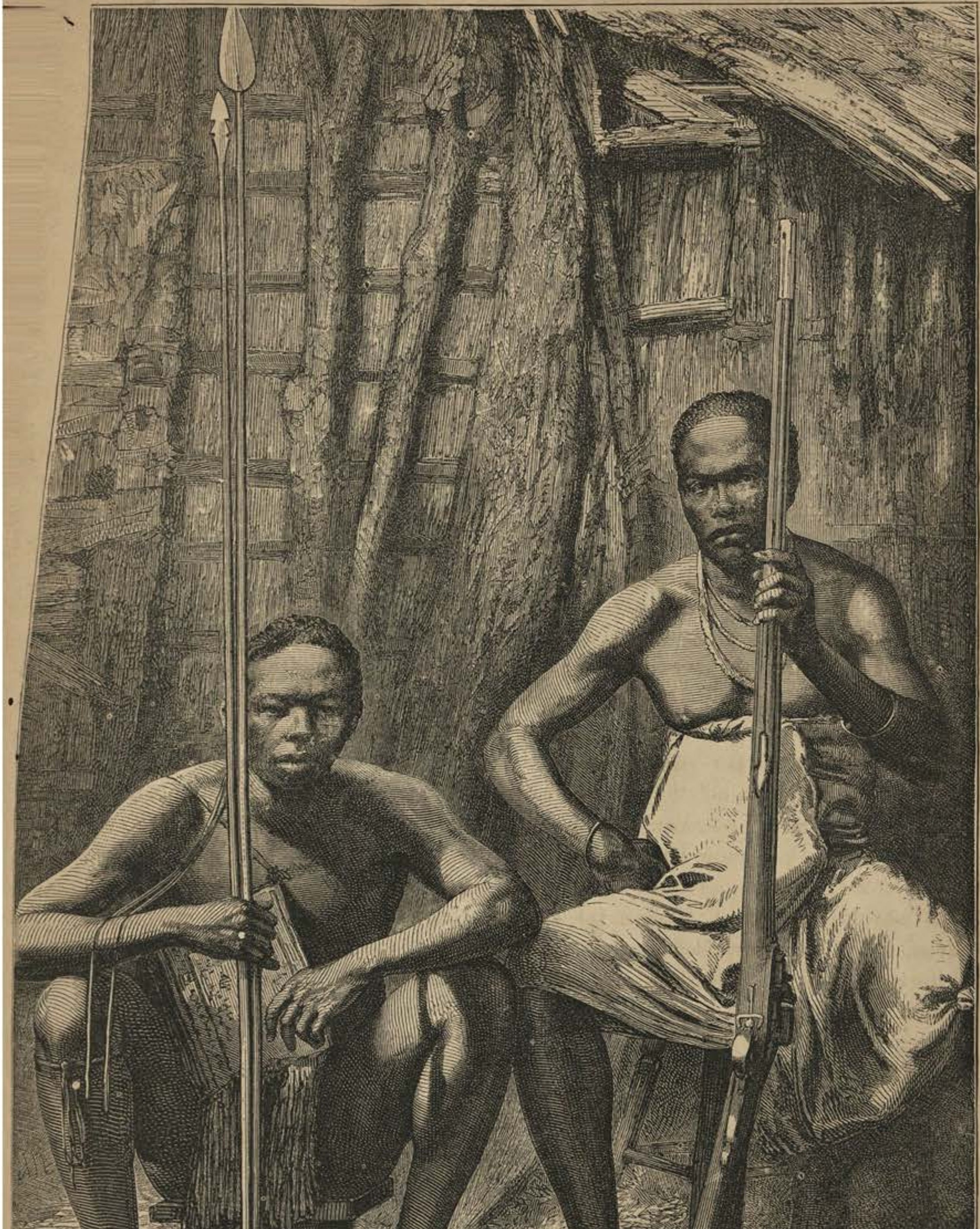
> "A Swiss with his halberd
> Paints on the castle door."

THE BAKALAIS.

Under this title is comprised a large and powerful tribe, wide-spread between the equator and 2° south of it, and between longitude 10° and 13° east of Greenwich. They are a wandering people, and colonise and intermingle with other tribes. Ebony and the usual products of tropical Africa form their commerce. In disposition they are watchful and suspicious, as becomes a people who live merely on terms of "armed neutrality" with neighbours into whose country they have wormed their way. Their chief homes are found all along the Rembo river. In complexion they are not so black as most of the neighbouring tribes, but are dirty in the extreme. They are usually clothed in rags, and never wear their usual grass-cloth when they can obtain cotton prints of civilised manufacture. To a nation of vagabonds, property, unless of that "portable" description which Mr. Guppy was emulous of possessing, can only be an encumbrance. Accordingly a Bakalai, as soon as he has a surplus of goods, invests it in a new wife, who is frequently betrothed to him when a mere child, and lives with her parents until her husband feels inclined or finds it convenient to remove her. Like some of the tribes we have already described (the M'pongwé, for example), a man will not marry a woman of his own clan, or even of the same village; but on his death his wives pass to his son, or if he has no son old enough to protect them, then to his brother or nearest of kin. Slavery prevails, but the slaves are not much in use, but kept as merchandise to be sold to other tribes. When the slave trade was in full activity on the West Coast of Africa, the Bakalais supplied many of those "bits of black ivory" which formed the staple of the swift sailing vessels which visited the unhealthy mouths of the rivers which flow into "the Bight."

Manioc or Cassava forms the chief article of diet among them, and nearly all kinds of food is dressed with the oil expressed from the seeds of the tree known as *njavi*, which is also used mixed with a ground odoriferous bark, to dress the hair, and, in lieu of the more expensive palm-oil, to grease their skins.

All of the West Coast of Africa is a fleshless country. No animal of any consequence is found near the coast. Gorillas and elephants are inhabitants of the jungles more in the interior. Accordingly, with the exception of fish, there is little animal food to be had, and the main staple of life is vegetable. But vegetable food—all theory to the contrary—even in tropical Africa becomes both to natives and whites insufferable, and the whole system seems to crave for animal food. This craving is known to them as *gouamba;* and in time it becomes



BAKALAIS WARRIORS.

a painful disease, causing the mind to be so excited at the sight of animal food as to weaken all control, and impel the enforced vegetarian to rush upon the carnivorous diet with an eagerness which savours more of a wild beast than of a man. Du Chaillu, who was now and then afflicted with it, describes it as "real and frightful torture." It is probable that this is one of the causes of cannibalism, for this horrible custom prevails chiefly in countries scarce of animal food, and where the chief reliance is upon the insipid manioc and such-like vegetables with which the tropics abound. The writer can well credit the accounts given of this *gouamba,* as on a small scale he has already experienced the same craving. After a vegetable diet of several days, the craving for animal food has become so excessive that, though he had abundance of flour to subsist on, this craving has impelled him to hunt laboriously for days in the worst weather, in the hope of killing a squirrel or other small game to gratify the insufferable *gouamba* craving. Having no agriculture nor domestic animals, hunting and fishing are the only methods by which animal food can be procured. Fish are chiefly caught during the summer months, and after a most primitive method. When the swollen waters of the river have receded, pools are left in the flat banks. These the fishermen bale out with pitchers, and then capture with their hands the fish which "wobble" about in the shallow water. Great quantities are eaten on the spot, but many are also smoked and dried for winter use.

Though cleanly in cookery, they will eat game so "high" that it would even be rejected by a fashionable English *gourmand.* Nor can every person eat the same kind of food. Buffalo, for instance, may be *roonda,* or forbidden, to one man (because tradition relates that ages ago a woman of his family gave birth to a calf!), crocodile flesh to another, elephant to a third, monkey to a fourth, and so on, until the bewildered traveller finds that, with the numerous *roondas* of his retainers, it is no easy matter to supply the demands of the commissariat department. So strict are these otherwise indiscriminate sarcophagists, that not even the cravings of the *gouamba,* or the pangs of hunger, will induce them to infringe the restrictions which the *roonda* puts on them.

Their dwellings they will shift frequently. Now, one of the chief inducements to do so is the belief that when a person dies in a village, death has made its appearance in that village, and it is just as well to escape from the king of terrors before he has done any further mischief. Accordingly the village, which might only have been built a few weeks, is deserted, and the villagers are on the march in search of another site for their homes. If a man gets sick, the people of the village, unless he has powerful friends in it, will often drive him away to die elsewhere, believing that death will follow him wherever he goes, to finish his deadly work; but if he remains in the village it is just probable that death may remain, and take a few more victims whilst on the spot.*

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* Dr. Livingstone mentions, in his recently published journals (December, 1874), that when a person dies among the Makondé of the Rovuma River, the whole population depart, saying, "That is a bad spot." As we shall not have an opportunity of availing ourselves of the great amount of interesting information about African customs contained in these volumes, we may note in this place the following curious custom:—"I gave," he writes, "Mokalaose [the chief of a tribe of the Lake Nyassa district] some pumpkin seed and peas. He took me into his house and presented a quantity of beer. I drank a little, and seeing me desist from taking more,

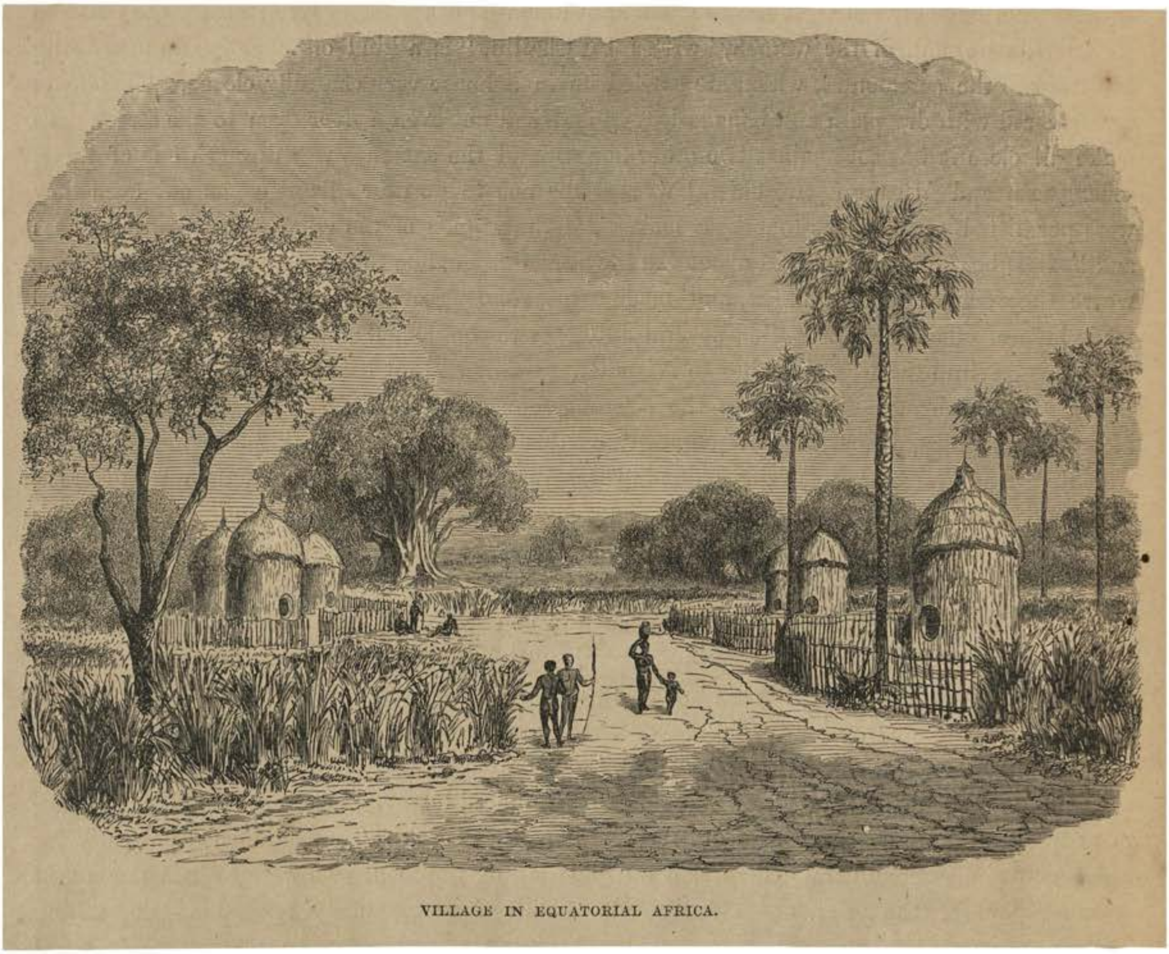
If a man falls, even by an accident, it is believed that witches are at work. In fact, the whole life of the Bakalai is rendered miserable by his fear of the powers of the unseen world. But all savages are very similar in this respect.

The idols are worshipped with singing, drumming, and dancing, in regard to the decency of which the less said the better. The men have one kind of ceremony in worship, the women another. The object of veneration to the females is Njambai—a good spirit, whose worship is wide-spread, not only amongst the Bakalais, but amongst other tribes lying nearer the coast.

"This worship of the women," writes Du Chaillu, "is a kind of mystery, no men being admitted to the ceremonies, which are carried on in a house very carefully closed. This house was covered with dry palm and banana-leaves, and had not even a door open to the street. To make all close it was set against two other houses, and the entrance was through one of these. Quengueza and M'bango [two chiefs] warned me not to go near this place, as not even they were permitted so much as to take a look. All the women of the village painted their faces and bodies, beat drums, marched about the town, and from time to time entered the idol-house, where they danced all one night, and made a more outrageous noise than even the men had made before. They also presented several antelopes to the goddess, and on the fourth all but a few went off into the woods to sing to Njambai. I noticed that half a dozen remained, and in the course of the morning went to the Njambai house, where they stayed in great silence. Now my curiosity, which had been greatly excited to know what took place in this secret worship finally overcame me. I determined to see. Walking several times up and down the street, past the house, to allay suspicion, I at last suddenly pushed aside some of the leaves, and stuck my head through the wall. For a moment I could distinguish nothing in the darkness. Then I beheld three perfectly naked old hags sitting on the clay floor, with an immense bundle of gregrees [fetishes] before them, which they seemed to be silently adoring. When they saw me they at once set up a hideous howl of rage, and rushed out to call their companions from the bush. In a few moments these came hurrying in, crying and lamenting, rushing towards me with gestures of anger, and threatening me for my offence. I quickly reached my house, and seizing my gun in one hand and a revolver in the other, told them I would shoot the first one that came inside my door. The house was surrounded by above three hundred infuriated women, every one shouting out curses at me; but the sight of my revolver kept them back. They adjourned presently for the Njambai house, and from there sent a deputation of the men, who were to inform me that I must pay for the 'palaver' I had made. This I peremptorily refused to do, telling Quengueza and M'bango that I was there a stranger, and must be allowed to do as I pleased, as their rules were nothing to me, who was a white man, and did not believe in their

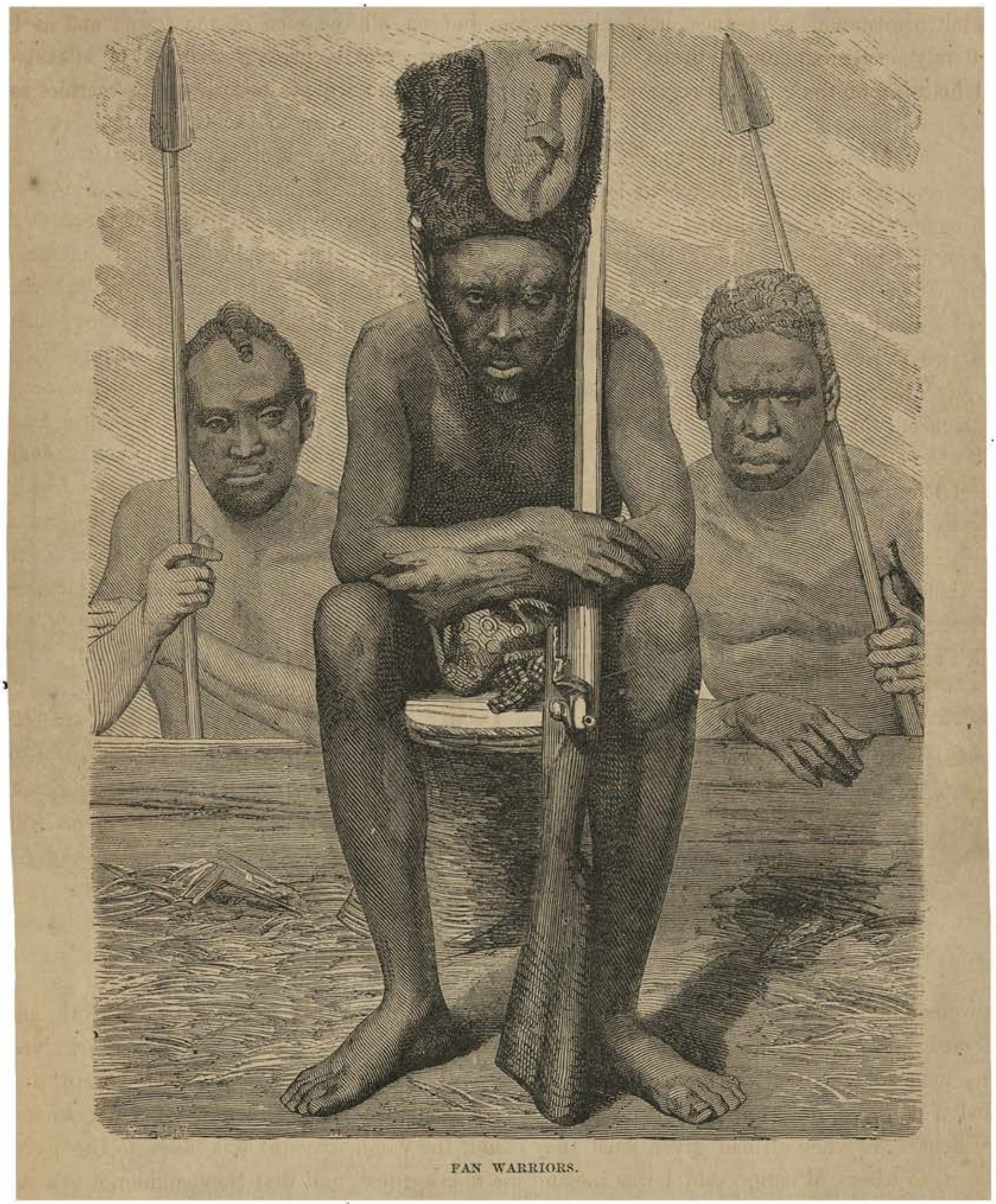
he asked if I wished a servant-girl to '*pata mimba*.' Not knowing what was meant, I offered the girl the calabash of beer, and told her to drink, but this was not the intention. He asked if I did not wish more, and then took the vessel, and as he drank the girl performed the operation on himself. Placing herself in front, she put both hands round his waist below the short ribs, and pressing, gradually drew them round to his belly in front. He took several prolonged draughts, and at each she repeated the operation, as if to make the liquor go equally over the stomach. Our topers don't seem to have discovered the need for this." In the Metamba country adjacent to the Lualaba, a quarrel with a wife often ends in his killing her and eating her heart, mixed with a huge mess of goats' flesh. This supplies a fetish or charm. In other parts fingers are taken as charms, but in the Bambarre country cannibalism pure and simple prevails.

idols. In truth, if I had once paid for such a transgression as this, there would have been an end of all travelling for me, as I often broke through their absurd rules without knowing it, and my only course was to declare myself irresponsible. However, the women would not give up, but threatened vengeance, not only on me, but on all the men of the town; and as I positively refused to pay anything, it was at last, to my great surprise, determined by M'bango and his male subjects that they would make up from their own possessions such a sacrifice as the women demanded of me. Accordingly, M'bango contributed ten yards of native cloth, and the men came one by one and put their offerings on the ground; some plates, some knives, some mugs, some beads, some mats, and various other articles. M'bango came again, and asked if I would not contribute something, but I refused. In fact, I dared not set such a precedent. So when all had given what they could, the whole amount was taken to the ireful women, to whom M'bango said I was his and his men's guest, and that they could not ask me to pay in such a matter, therefore they paid the demands themselves. With this the women were satisfied, and then the quarrel ended. Of course, I could not make any further investigations into their mysteries. The Njambai feasts last about two weeks. I could learn very little about the spirit which they call by this name. Their own ideas are quite vague. They know



VILLAGE IN EQUATORIAL AFRICA.

only that it protects the women against their male enemies, avenges their wrongs, and serves them in various ways, if they please it."



FAN WARRIORS.

The Fans.

Just north of the equator, on the most easterly Gaboon, is the region of this nationality. But their home is every year approaching nearer and nearer the coast, until by-and-by, as the M'pongwés are ousted out or disappear, the bolder, more energetic, and in every way superior race of the Fans will take their place. They call themselves the "Ba-Fan," or "Fanh;" but by the coast tribes they are known as the "Pahouin," or "Pasuen." There is every probability that they originally came from some country lying to the north-east—not improbably from the Niger country. In appearance they are not unlike the Fulahs of that region. They are fairer than the tribes around, have a metal currency like that of Nigritia, and in many of their habits correspond to the people of the region drained by the Niger. In other habits—particularly that of circumcision—they are similar to the tribes around them. But many habits are exactly the same all over West Africa, and others may be learned by imitation by a people who have so long commingled with the tribes of the Bight of Biafra. The comparatively thin lips, the want of the "prognathos" or projecting jaw of the typical Negro, and the form of the skull, single them out as a "peculiar people." A piece of bark-cloth, or, if the individual is a man of rank, a tiger-skin, with the tail hanging downwards, wrapt around their loins, forms their sole dress. They have a little beard, which they divide into two twisted *queues;* and a similar appendage, partly made of their own hair, partly of tow, is attached to their woolly locks behind. Unmarried girls wear no dress at all, and matrons only a slight apron, in addition to a sort of back belt, passing over one shoulder and under the other, to suspend the child by. A few ornaments on the head, and the usual copper bracelets on arms and legs, complete the Fan lady's costume.

In disposition they are bold and warlike, and carry all before them. In their gradual migration towards the sea they have even driven the M'pongwés before them. Seemingly conscious that they are not universally popular, they always go armed, chiefly with a long knife—or, rather, sword—often three feet in length, and several inches in width. They also carry axes, which are not used for hand-to-hand combat, but are thrown with terrible precision and effect. They also use spears, which, on the other hand, are not thrown, but employed as thrusting weapons at close quarters. The steel parts of all of their weapons are made from steel manufactured by themselves, with the rudest appliances, from iron smelted by themselves, from pieces of ore found lying scattered on the surface of the country in certain places. The cross-bow is also one of their weapons, and at short distances is very effective. Their arrows are small, unfeathered, and poisoned with juice derived from some plant as yet unknown to Europeans. Larger arrows are used in hunting. Shields are made from the hide of the elephants, which are hunted extensively by them. Their method of "hunting" elephants is ingenious in its very simplicity. "Hunting" it can scarcely be called; but no savage has any idea of "sport." To kill, and to kill in the easiest, least dangerous, and most expeditious method, are the maxims he adopts. The elephant, notwithstanding its strength, is a very timid animal. The very sight of a fence alarms it, and renders the huge animal so nervous that, though with its enormous muscular power it could break through it with ease, it either resigns itself to its fate, or still further renders itself helpless in its frantic *unsystematic* attempts to get out of the enclosure in which it finds itself. This weakness of the giant of the jungle is well known to the Fan, who accordingly utilises it in the following manner:—A *cul-de-sac,* or enclosure open at one end, is built up of the elastic stems of the trailing vine. In this an elephant or elephants are driven, and while the furious animals are panic-stricken, the Fans surround them on all sides, plying them with deadly thrusts of their great broad-bladed spears, while others climb the surrounding trees nimbly as monkeys, and shower blows down on them from above. This is dangerous work, and such a fight rarely ends without some of the "hunters" being trampled under foot or seized by the animals' trunks and dashed to pieces in their fury. The elephant is also killed by a method similar to what we have described as adopted by the Nile tribes in killing the rhinoceros, viz., by a loaded harpoon being dropped on it.

Manioc, pumpkins, &c., form their chief resources for vegetable food, and everything is either cooked abominably, or, what is better, is left altogether uncooked. Like all these vegetable-eating tribes, they become perfectly crazy if left long without animal food; hence, perhaps, a rather disagreeable method they have of supplying their wants, of which more anon. Their cooking-pots are made by themselves out of clay, and considering that they are altogether hand-made, are very creditable pieces of ceramic ware. Pipes, water-bottles, &c., are also made by themselves; though the richer people prefer iron tobacco-pipes.

Talking of food brings us to that habit which has given them of late years a rather unenviable notoriety, viz, *cannibalism;* though, in justice to them, it must be said that they are not, as has been asserted, the only West African tribes who indulge now, or who have at some former period, indulged in this uncomfortable taste for bipedal banquets. Generally, the victims among the Fans are prisoners captured in war, or wizards who have been executed for their evil deeds. These last are not, however, altogether approved of by connoisseurs, as they are suspected of, even in the stomach, being capable of doing mischief. It is asserted, though not on very high authority, that they will eat their dead relatives, dig freshly-buried bodies out of the graves of a tribe they are at war with, and buy dead slaves for culinary purposes from neighbouring tribes, at the rather high rate of an elephant's tooth apiece. It is even said—and the reader may take the statement for what it is worth—that in polite Fan society it is accounted a very courteous act to exchange bodies for table use with any of the neighbouring villages with whom, accidentally, they may just then happen to be at peace! It is a custom of the Gaboon tribes to bury with the bodies of great men considerable treasure, in the shape of ornaments, and various pots, weapons, tools, &c., so as to enable the deceased to start the world in comfort in the new land to which he is proceeding. The marauding Fans, aware of this, after plundering a hostile village immediately proceed to the burying-ground, and ransack the graves. It is narrated that on one of these occasions the war party, finding a newly-buried body in a grave, dug it up, cooked it in the pots buried along with it, and then and there dined. The story is so horrible that one would be inclined to deny it; but I am afraid it is too well authenticated to be seriously doubted.

Children are betrothed early in life, but generally not married until both parties are grown up. Indeed, this, independently of the tender years of the couple, becomes very frequently a necessity, as the price of a wife is so high that a lover will often require many years of hard work and unremitting plundering before he can raise enough to pay for his bride. It sometimes happens that a speculative father refrains from betrothing his daughter, if she promises to be beautiful, until she is grown up, when she is exposed to auction, and sold to the highest bidder. Part of the price agreed upon is paid at once, and the rest when the bride is handed over to her husband; an event celebrated with an enormous amount of eating and drinking at the expense of the "happy man."

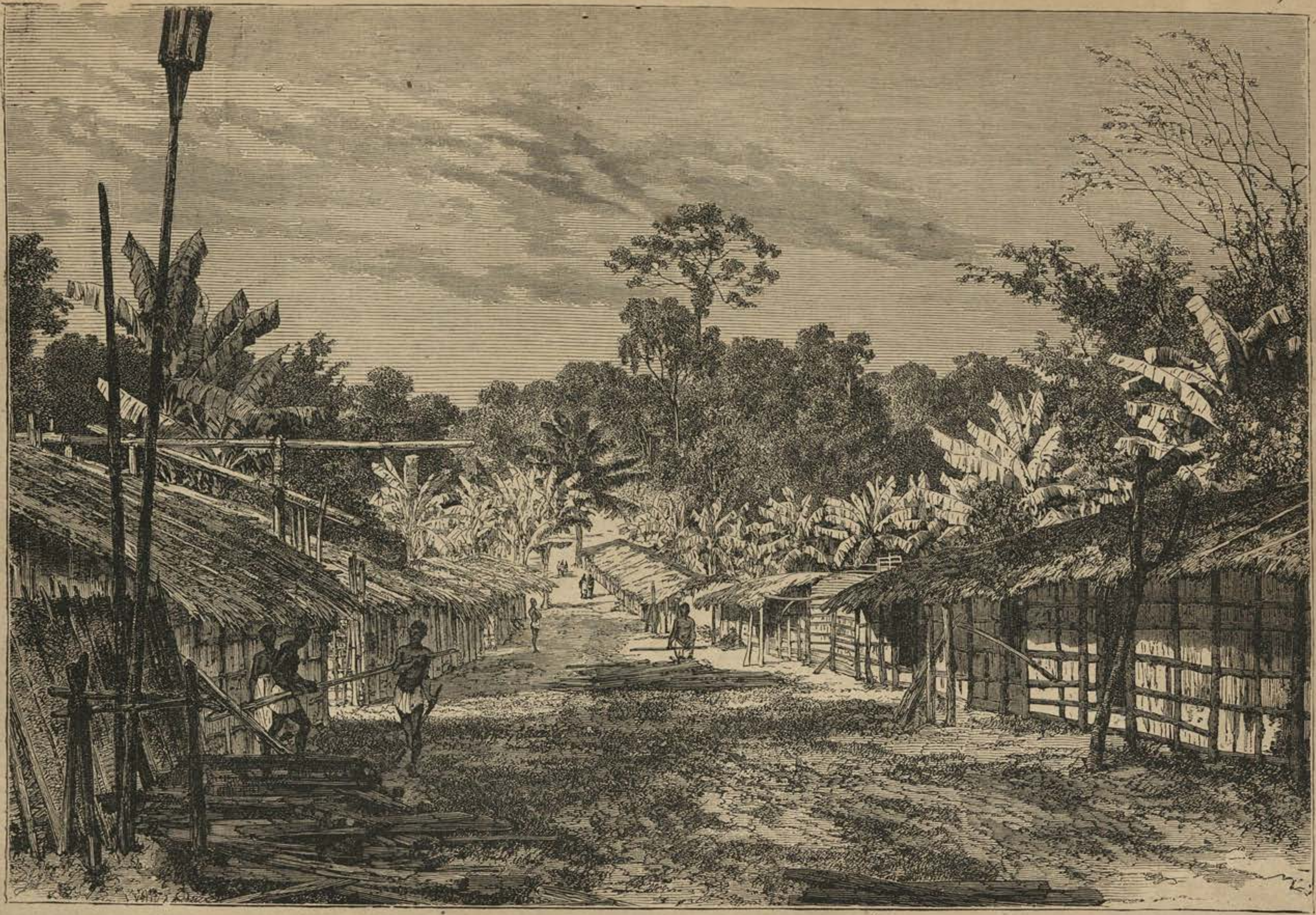
There is generally an idol for each village. To worship it, the villagers assemble at stated times, and dance and sing in unison. In the idol-house or temple there are kept a number of skulls—that of the gorilla among others. These skulls are looked on as sacred objects, and to abstract or in any way injure them would be an unpardonable offence. Like all their neighbours, they are ever in fear of witchcraft, and conceive that every misfortune must be owing to the plotting of some enemy. If a wizard is convicted of the crime laid to his charge, he must generally expiate his offence by death, though sometimes he is sold into slavery. To protect themselves against witchcraft and other dangers the Fans have many amulets, each suitable for a particular occasion. Thus, there is a fetish which will protect the person of the warrior in battle, and another which will keep him free from small-pox.

They celebrate the new moon with music and dancing. The drum is their favourite musical instrument; it is held between the knees of the performer standing. Elephants which have been enticed into the *corrall* or enclosure are often kept there to be killed in honour of the new moon. Above all the Fan country is the "gorilla country." This huge ape is terribly dreaded by the Fans, though killed and hunted by them. In regard to the controversy which has arisen of late years in reference to this animal—a controversy which, it is unnecessary to inform most of my readers, centres around a gentleman more than once mentioned in this chapter, and to whose long experience of the Gaboon and neighbouring tribes we shall still again have to put ourselves under obligation—we have little to do. The "Trogdolytes Gorilla" has, no doubt, been a sort of "public character," and anthropology has, like other branches of science, been concerned, or been concerning itself, with him. It is not, however, our business to ascertain how many convolutions the Fan brain has in comparison with the gorilla brain, but how far the manifestations of the former are displayed in the habits, ideas, and customs more or less savage and brutal. Messrs. Huxley, Owen, and others will enlighten us on every anatomical point in connection with the huge ape of the Gaboon region; while we will allow Messrs. Du Chaillu and Reade to fight out their battle under the watchful eyes of Dr. Gray. Meantime to turn to the proper task we have allotted to ourselves.

CHAPTER IX.

Tribes of the Fernand Vaz and Country to the Eastward.

About 110 miles south of the Gaboon the great Fernand Vaz river flows into the sea. The part which flows easterly is known as the Rembo—a generic name, however, in this region for a river. Like the rest of Western Africa, for two or three degrees on both sides of the equator a dense jungle lines the shore from the line where the surface ceases to beat, and stretches, only relieved by a green, oasis-like prairie at rare intervals, to the eastward; how far has not yet been determined, but probably to the great range of mountains which has been hitherto the limits of easterly exploration. Along the banks of this river and its tributaries, and in the country lying between it and the great Ogobai river, which falls into the sea north of Cape



STREET IN A TROPICAL AFRICAN VILLAGE.

Lopez, are numerous tribes. Many of them are no doubt mere subdivisions of one great stock, and have a philological and genealogical relationship. But how far this goes we are not yet in a position to say. To generalise from our imperfect materials would be a rash and pre-eminently a useless task. Accordingly, as it is almost solely to M. Paul du Chaillu that we owe what little we know of these tribes, it may be as convenient an arrangement as any other, and not much less scientific, simply to take them in the order in which that courageous, long-suffering, if occasionally Gallicly imaginative traveller encountered them.

CAMMA.

The Camma, or Commi, are essentially the people of the Fernand Vaz. Their villages dot the banks of the Rembo, under which name we have already noted that the upper and easterly part of the river is called. They are doubtless a branch of the same family as the Gaboon tribes, who have continual communication with them, by means of canoes, in which they skirt the coast, but enter the Fernand Vaz by the Ogobai in order to avoid the long detour necessary to round Cape Lopez. There are numerous sub-tribes, who differ little from each other in appearance or customs. Like all of the West Coast tribes the "kings," though so called by the traders, are rather republican chiefs, whose authority is of the very slightest, and rule rather more patriarchal than even purely democratic. In appearance the people are olive or chocolate-coloured, and have less of the Negro type of face than most other of the West Coast people. The character given them by those who have mingled amongst them is that of a cruel, superstitious, selfish race, but yet not without some traits of kindness and nobility. An average white man's opinion of any people is, however, of little value, for he is apt to declare them good or bad, not from an induction founded on an extensive series of observations, but simply according to the individual impression which *he* may have got from a short visit to them under circumstances which allowed little of their real character to come out, or from having had a prosperous or unprosperous trading adventure with them. To "speak of a man as you find him" may as a civilised piece of axiomatic minor morality be excellent, yet to apply it to a savage people is most fallacious, and would lead a traveller acting upon it to make the most rash, untrustworthy, and absurd statements.

Like all these African tribes, they are not deficient in etiquette and "court" ceremonial. Tribal councils are held, presided over by the "king," who, as an insignium of his rank, holds in his hand a wooden staff or sceptre. The councillors are not all speakers. No man can speak in the council until the king's staff has been handed to him; and this is a privilege accorded but to few. How happy would it be in a certain "kingdom by the sea" could this custom be introduced as a check upon the interminable talk which goes on in *its* council-lodge! A *palaver*, or talking council, must be held on every subject, whether it is to right a native overreached by a sharp trader, to adjust the punishment to a wife who has eloped from her husband—the ears of both herself and her lover being cut off, though in the case of the man the offence is usually expiated by a fine—or to pronounce sentence of death on a murderer, be his crime premeditated or accidental. If the case is one of homicide, the usual custom is, however, to exact a heavy fine in lieu of the offender's life. If the offender cannot be captured the husband goes out and kills the first man he meets, and returns perfectly satisfied that by so doing he has expiated his vengeance for the wrongs inflicted on him. The relatives of the murdered man now take up the case, and in their turn revenge his death, not by killing the murderer or any of his relatives, but some person in another village who has had nothing whatever to do with the quarrel. They again retaliate, and so the feud is passed on from village to village, until in time the cause of the whole string of murders is lost sight of. At last things come to such a state that the whole district is in arms, the villages are barricaded at night—in a word, the land is under military law. Such a state of matters becomes unendurable. A palaver is held by the chief, and the cause of the original quarrel inquired into. If the offender can be got at he is punished, if not, the chief of the clan to which the man last murdered belongs has to pay a fine to the injured relatives, and there the matter ends. It ought, however, to be mentioned that it is rarely that the palaver is resorted to until some hapless tribe has a man murdered whose relatives can find no one to retaliate on.

The virtue of the women is little respected, and cases are not unknown—over the whole extent of West Africa, indeed, the practice is common—for the wives of chiefs to get up a flirtation with impressible young men, so as to enable the husband to extort property from the terrified victims, who dread a palaver and its consequences. Old age is, however, always treated with profound respect, no young person ever entering into the presence of an aged person of either sex without bending humbly, and otherwise showing the veneration due from youth to age. Even the skulls and bones of aged people are treated with respect, being kept in houses set aside for the purpose. The chalk with which they are surrounded is thought to possess a peculiar efficacy, and is accordingly employed to paint the faces of the warriors before engaging in battle.

Like many of the West Coast tribes, they have a great ambition to collect an immense quantity of boxes in which to store property which may at some future time be acquired. Camma courtesy, however, takes for granted that they are *always* filled with property. The result is that the making of packing-boxes engrosses a good deal of a West African householder's time. Their dances are many and wild. That in emulation or in honour of the gorilla is somewhat peculiar, but we must refer our readers to Mr. Winwood Reade for a description of it.

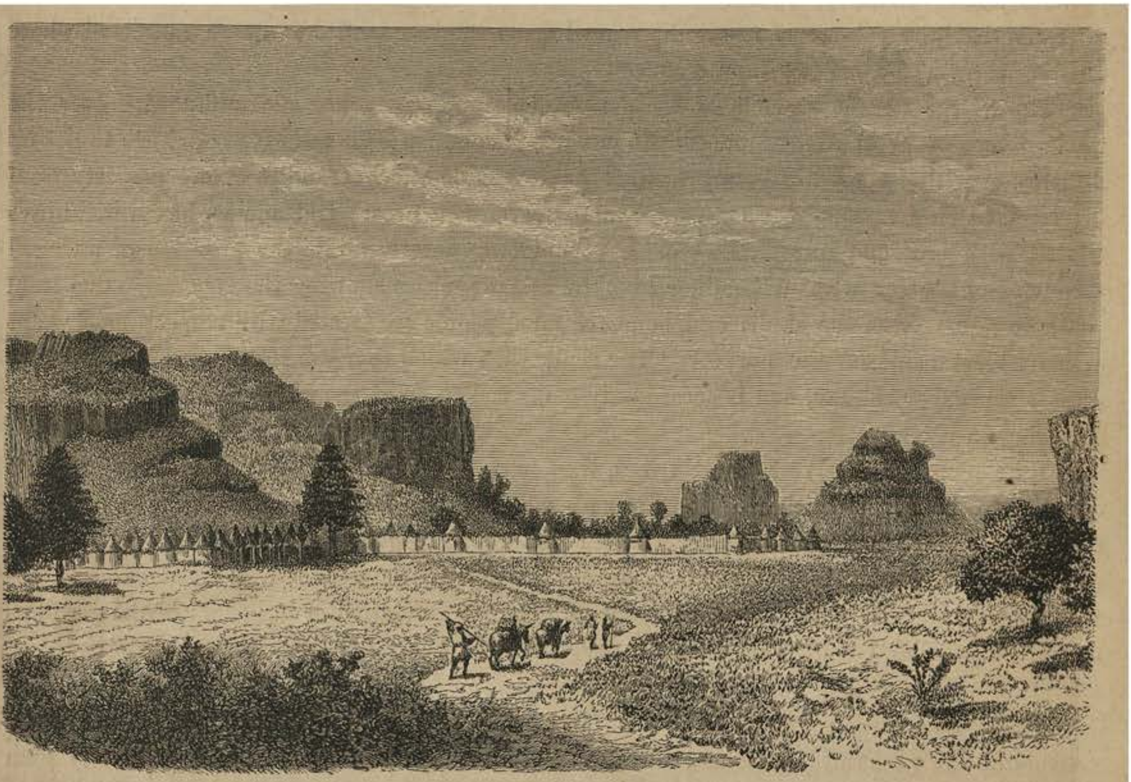
Gross superstition and debasement characterise every act of their lives. Elaborate ceremonies are performed in honour of the new moon; fetish is in full blast, and every man of any consequence has some ugly image which travels around with him. This is his fetish. Small-pox they consider a wind sent from N'yange, the mighty, though among others sorceresses are credited (?) with sending it; and accordingly, the survivors, acting on this theory, kill these ill-doers.

If a woman is about to become a mother, neither she nor her husband is allowed to see a gorilla, otherwise the expected child would become one. No one is allowed to drink of the Rembo water, for as the ashes of sorceresses are thrown into it, any one drinking of the waters would become a wizard against his will. On an island in the Rembo there is believed to exist a crocodile with brazen scales—terrible to look on—a dread being, at the sight of which all die or go mad, and wander about until they die.

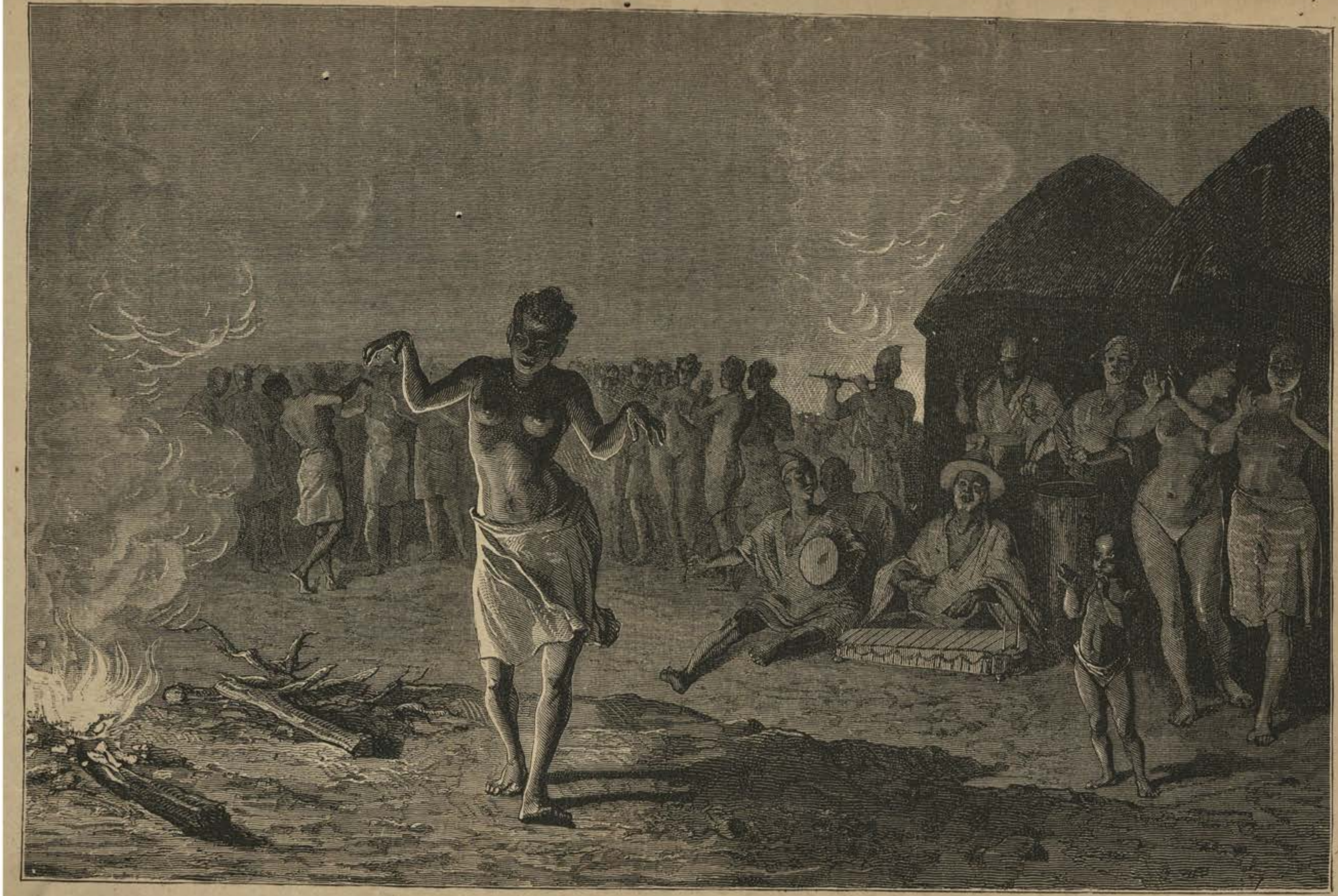
To enumerate all their superstitions would be endless, and a questionable use of the space at our disposal. Those curious in West African fetish and superstition will find sufficient details in the works of the travellers we have already quoted.

ISHOGOS.

This tribe inhabits the country below the equator between 10°—12° E. in a strip of country parallel with the Rembo N'Gouyai River, but divided from it by a range of hills. In appearance the Ishogos, though woolly-haired, are not very Negro-like, and on the whole are a fine race. Their black skin they tint by rubbing on it the red powder obtained by scraping two pieces of bar-wood (*Baphia nitida*) together. A further improvement on nature is, in Ishogo ideas, obtained by extracting two of the front teeth. But the great glory of Ishogo dandyism is the manipulation which their hair undergoes. Eyelashes and eyebrows are altogether erased. The men in addition only allow a tuft to remain on the top of their crown, the rest being shaved off, while the women train theirs on a conical-looking framework of green cloth, until it projects posteriorly in the shape of a peculiar chignon. The men divide their coronal tuft into three parts, each of which comes to a point, and is terminated with a piece of polished wire, or perhaps by a particularly gaudy bead. So slow is the growth of the hair that it is seldom that an Ishogo head-dress can be completed under five or six years, and the woman's is so elaborated that it is rarely finished before she has attained her twenty-fifth year. Their dress is made of the native "grass" cloth, manufactured out of the cuticle—not of grasses, but of palm leaves, by the aid of an ingenious native loom. A length of this growth is used among them as currency, a slave, an elephant's tusk, or any other article of value, being estimated as being



FORTIFIED NATIVE VILLAGE.



AN AFRICAN DANSEUSE.

worth so many "bongo," or pieces of cloth. Though possessing spears, and bows and arrows, the Ishogos do not as a rule go armed, though it is considered etiquette to put on a sword when a neighbouring village is visited. Unlike most African people who have the means of making abundance of palm-wine, they are a remarkably sober people. Their villages are usually built of mud, and sometimes consist of two hundred or more huts in company.

In addition to a "palaver house," there is in every village a temple, or M'buiti house, containing a large idol, to which great reverence is paid. In the middle of every village a large *Ficus*, or india-rubber tree, stands. This tree is sacred, and looked upon as being wrapped up with the property of the village. When the village is founded, a twig of this species of tree is planted in the middle of it; and henceforward it is believed that the village will prosper or go to ruin, in exact accordance with the prosperity or decay of the guardian tree. If the tree should die, then farewell to the luck of the village; forthwith the site is deserted, and a new one chosen. Often charms or fetishes are buried at the base of the tree, and in some villages a couple of skulls of the gorilla are stuck on poles under the tree, with apparently the same underlying idea of strengthening the good fortune of the village by such a powerful fetish. Twins are allowed to live, but the house in which this sad freak of Nature occurred, is a marked dwelling. No one, except the children and their parents, are allowed to enter his hut. If any one does so, slavery is his lot. The children themselves are not allowed to play with other children, and even the utensils of the hut cannot be used by any one else. The mother is not allowed to talk to any one not belonging to her own family, a restriction sufficiently irritable to the whole sex, but to the loquacious African woman maddening in the extreme. In a word, she is kept in the absolute seclusion consistent with the performance of her necessary household duties. If the children both survive until the end of the sixth year, it is supposed that Nature has accommodated herself to the existence of the twins; and the mother and children are released from confinement, and allowed to mingle among their species. At daybreak proclamation is made, and the mother, accompanied by a female friend, marches down the street beating a drum, and singing a song appropriate to the occasion. After this a feast and a dance takes place, and henceforward the mother and children have no restrictions thrown upon their intercourse with their fellow-villagers. A dislike of twins is a wide-spread superstition. In the Island of Bali, near Java, a woman who is unfortunate enough to have twins is obliged, along with her husband, to betake herself to the sea-shore or the tombs, and there for the space of a month to live, until she gets purified, and, after making a suitable sacrifice, can return to the village. This is, however, a comparatively humane treatment of the mother and offspring, just at the very period when greater care and attention is required to be paid to her. The Khasias of Hindostan consider that to have twins assimulates the mother to the lower animals, and accordingly one of them is frequently killed. An exactly similar custom, coupled with the same idea regarding the disgrace of having twins, prevails among some of the Vancouver Island tribes. Among the Ainos—aborigines of the islands north of Japan—one of twins is always killed; but in Arebo, in Guinea, both they and the mother are killed. The same idea prevails among various other barbarous or savage tribes.

Sir John Lubbock, from whose collection of facts bearing on this subject we have gleaned some of the foregoing instances, considers that the savage prejudice against twins is owing to the curious idea that a man should have only one child, so that twins imply infidelity of a very aggravated character. With every respect for this learned ethnologist, I am inclined to think that this is perhaps not the sole idea influencing the conduct of so many different and widely-scattered people, in reference to this very common maternal incident. Perhaps it may have originated in a very early and primitive condition of society, when the tribal children were all held in common, as we know does happen among some very low races at the present day; and might have been adopted to decrease the number of mouths which required to be provided for by the common exertions of the tribe.

ASHANGOS.

Their houses lie east of the last-named tribe, and though speaking a different dialect from the Ishogos, their similarity, and in many cases identity of customs, show that originally they belonged to the same stock with the people just mentioned. They differ from most of the African tribes, in so far that they not only dress themselves with great elaboration, but even indulge in the superfluous refinement of dressing their children. When they travel abroad they are well armed with swords, spears, and poisoned arrows. The sword is worn on all occasions, and curiously, when this weapon is sold or exchanged, it is done in private, for some reason which has never been explained. All of their arms, with the exception of the bows and arrows, are manufactured by the Sheriba and Ashangui tribes, who are the best blacksmiths in all the region of West Africa. M. du Chaillu, to whom we are indebted for our sole knowledge of this and the neighbouring tribes, gives us a graphic account of some of their superstitions. Before going to war each warrior eats a portion of a mess of herbs, and fetishes of all sorts, which are cooked in secret by the fetishman. After all have tasted it, the remainder of the porridge-like material is rubbed over the warriors' bodies, until they are in a state of sufficient excitement to rush off to the fight. Among other superstitions, women are not allowed to eat goat or fowls. When an honoured visitor is received, they meet him with some dishes of red paint, with which he is expected to besmear himself. The request to paint himself red is looked upon as a sign that the visitor is a welcome guest; but if the paint be withheld, then the contrary is understood.

OBONGOS.

We now come to a race of dwarfs who burrow in the jungle between 11° and 12° east longitude, in the vicinity of the equator. They do not appear to be in any way connected either with the people whom we have described, or with the tribe whom we shall touch upon after we have noted their character. Still, as our knowledge of the affinities of these inter-tropical tribes is so meagre, we may just as well describe the Obongos in this place. They are a miserable people, in character and mode of life little elevated above the lower animals. They have no trace of civilisation, and no settled abodes, their houses being merely dens or boughs scattered originally through the dense forest, and closed with a bough of a tree in lieu of a door. These lairs so abound with vermin that life is scarcely tolerable in them, and even their wretched inhabitants have in time, on this account, to abandon them. For weeks afterwards the locality is almost unapproachable on account of the stench and vermin which assail the nostrils and limbs of the unwary traveller. In complexion they are a palish yellow-brown.

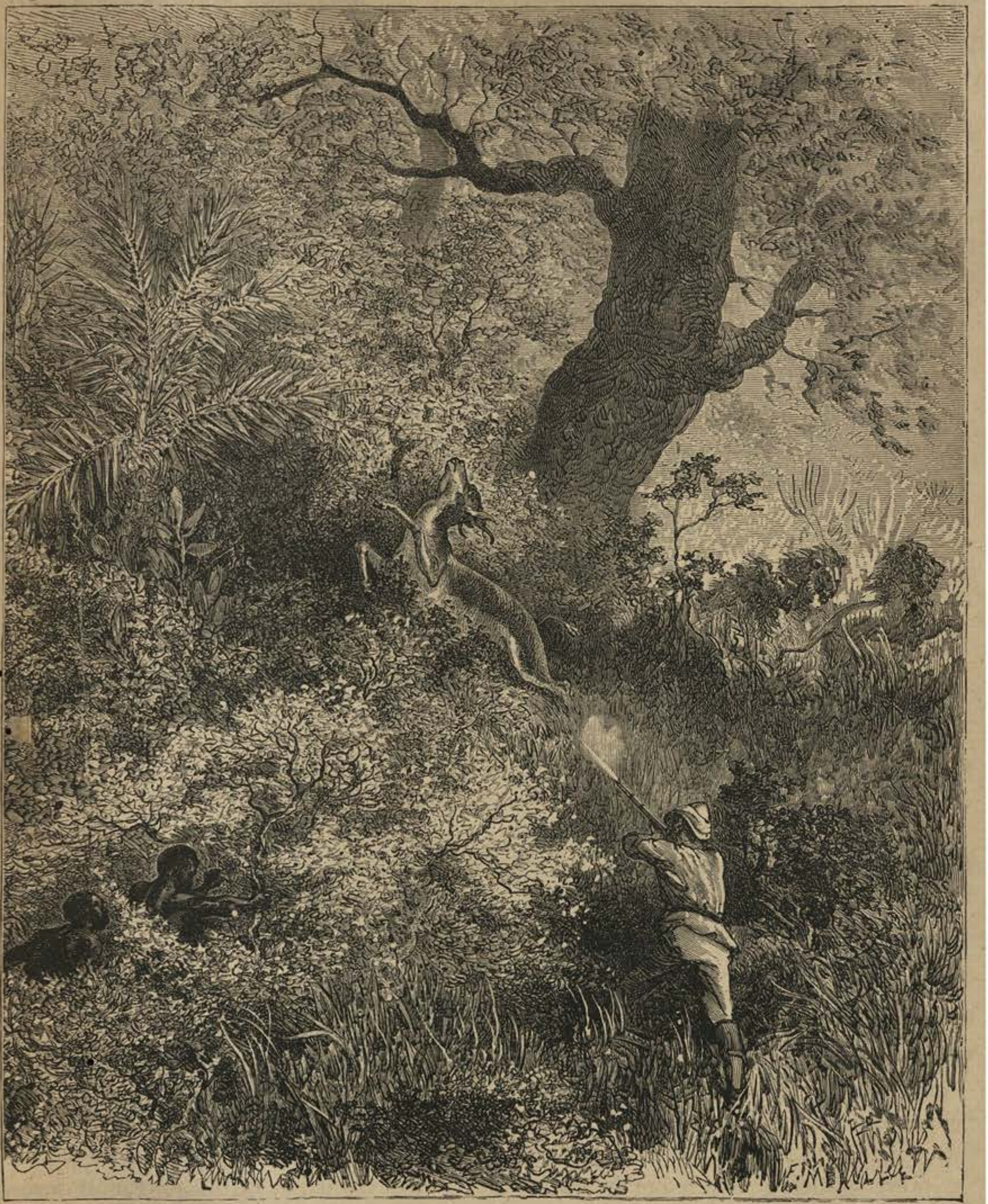
Their foreheads are narrow, cheek-bones high, and hair in short tufts. In figure they are not ill-shaped, though dwarfed in stature, rarely averaging more than four and a half to four feet seven inches; a man of five and a quarter feet is a giant in the Obongo-land. The bestial character of this degraded (?) race is further evinced by the fact that the men have their breasts covered with tufts of hair like that on the head. Their legs are short in proportion to the body, and altogether they are an "uncanny," elfish looking race. They have rarely any dress, or when such is worn, it is only the cast-off rags given by the Ashangos who are very kind, even generous, to their dwarfish neighbours. The Obongos are good hunters and trappers. The woods in which they have their home so perfectly abound with the pitfalls, which they have constructed with a view to the capture of wild animals, that it is dangerous to walk in the jungle unless the traveller has some one with him to guard him against the traps in which they capture leopards, wild boars, antelopes, &c. Agriculture is altogether unknown to them. Roots form their chief article of food, though flesh is eagerly devoured by them when they can obtain it. What their origin is it is now difficult to ascertain. The probabilities are that they are the real aborigines of the country, and were displaced by the Ashangos—a race capable of better things than they have hitherto done—just as we see the Fans and other African nations advancing from the interior and displacing the races previously occupying the soil. The Abongos live in little communities or *triblets* of ten or twelve, never marrying out of it. Hence, the Ashangos report that "marriages" between brothers and sisters are permitted. This statement, though revolting, is only too likely to be true, when the low character and habits of the race are taken into account. They are very timid, and retreat into their dens like wild animals when strangers sight them.

Their dead they bury by dropping into hollow trees, and then covering the corpse over with earth and leaves. Another method of disposing of the body is to bury it in the bed of a stream, the course of which has been previously diverted. The stream is then turned out again and the waters flow over the sub-aquatic grave. This mode of burial is adopted by other people, beside the Obongos, but, as might be expected, is too laborious to be practised in the case of any one but chiefs and other dignitaries.

APONO.

Their villages are scattered South of the equator between longitude 11° and 12° East. They are a good-natured, merry race; in their villages, unless during the palm-wine season, when they are continually intoxicated and very quarrelsome, the sound of the drum and the cheery dance may be heard through half the night. Their moral character is described as being better than that of most of their neighbours. Above all, they are honest and faithful, qualities not often found in the aboriginal African.

They are disagreeable in appearance, from the custom which they have of disfiguring themselves by knocking out the two middle teeth of the upper jaw, and filing all the rest to sharp points. Tattooing is practised, especially among the women, who have the habit of making scars, often in the form of a diamond, between the eyes. They are indifferent warriors, notwithstanding their seemingly formidable bows and arrows, which are of poor character and very insufficient in practice. Like the Bushmen, they poison their arrows, and the heads are so



SPORT IN THE FOREST.

fastened that they remain in the flesh while the shafts fall to the ground. Another of their weapons is a formidable spear, too heavy to be thrown, but which at close quarters can do fatal execution. Another favourite weapon is a heavy scimitar, which is made by the Abombos and

Ilgavis, who live to the east of them. The blades are generally curved, but they are also sometimes straight, and four feet in length. They use circular shields made of basket-work.

Their villages are well built, the walls of the houses being made of bamboo and the roofs of palm leaves. Each wife has a separate hut, and as a man builds a fresh house for every addition to his harem, the number of a man's wives can, as is the case in other tribes, be told by the number of huts which are attached to the main one.

Like all their race, the Aponos are full of superstition, and live ever in the fear of witchcraft, "the evil eye." Their idols are hideous and obscene.

APINGI.

This people live nearer the coast than the Ishogo, from whom they are separated by a range of hills. They are not a handsome race, and the women are as a rule excessively ugly; their scanty modicum of good looks not being improved by the practice of filing the teeth, and the plentiful tattoo with which they deck their persons. What little clothing they wear is made of the "grass" cloth formerly mentioned, but dress in inter-tropical Africa is classed among the vanities—many of them in the matter of wardrobe preferring

> "That painted vest Prince Voltiger had on,
> Which from a naked Pict his grandsire won."

The Apingi are, however, famous as weavers, their cloth forming an article of trade even on the coast where European manufactures can be readily obtained.

They are excellent boatmen, and practised swimmers, an accomplishment necessary from so much of their life being passed on the swift river. One of the most extraordinary of matrimonial laws prevails among this otherwise primitive people. We have seen, when considering marriage customs, that among some tribes, if the possession of a wife is challenged by another man powerful enough to support his wishes by force, the husband must part with her. But among the Apingi the matter is still further simplified. If a man falls in love with another's wife, and she reciprocates his affection—as affection is understood in savage Africa—the husband is compelled to part with her on the lover repaying him the sum he originally paid for her to her parents. It is, in fact, a primitive development of "free love," with the addition of "purchase."

Slavery, but of a very mild character, prevails in this tribe. A slave can always escape a severe master by going to another village and claiming the protection of any new master whom he may select. In such a case the former owner has no power to reclaim his slave, nor can the chosen master reject the offer thus voluntarily made to him. Hospitality is extensively practised among the Apingi, and it is the custom, as it was in former times in Europe, and in some stately old European courts is to this day so far as the wine is concerned, for the host to taste every article of food before the guest partakes of it, the object of this ceremonial being, of course, to prevent poisoning.

Their religion is of the usual fetish character, and from what little we know is so like what we have already so repeatedly described as believed in and practised by allied tribes, that space need not be devoted to any account of it. The burial ceremony, if burial it can be styled, is of so peculiar a character, that, as a contribution to the sepulchral rites of different savages, we may take a note of it. When a person dies the body is allowed to remain inside his house as long as it can hold together. The nearest relative then comes and carries off the putrid corpse on his shoulders, and deposits it in some retired spot. No grave is dug; a few pieces of ivory, and personal ornaments or other articles, are laid beside it, and the dead is left to itself, either to be devoured by wild animals or to rapidly putrify in the African sun.

ASHIRA.

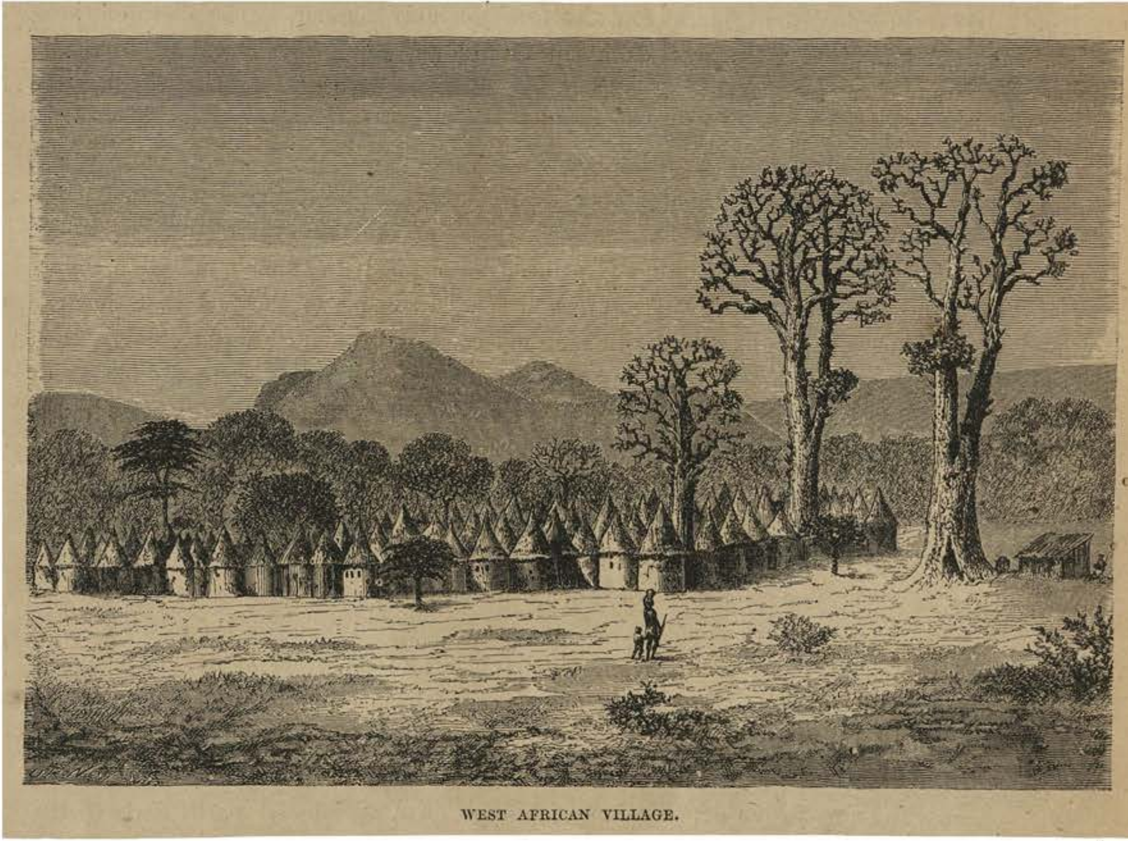
Unlike the Apingi, the Ashira are a handsome and fine race of savages, with a complexion as frequently bronze-coloured as black, and features tolerably regular. The distinguishing feature of male Ashira attire is the grass-cloth cap, though any cap is equally valued, especially if it be of a gaudy character. A bag, strung courier-fashion over the shoulders, supplies the place of a pocket, while bracelets and anklets of thick copper wire or brass take the place of the jewellery for which all the African tribes have such a passion.

Until they are married the females wear no clothing whatever, unless an ornamental girdle of grass-cloth, which does not even supply the place of the primeval fig-leaf, be looked upon as such. Teeth-filing, hair-dressing, and painting of the body to an elaborate state, supply the place of any other toilette. The women are well treated, owing to the fact that they can own property in their own right, and by this means can exert no little authority over their needy lords, whom they have brought a dowry to. Even the family pipe is equally owned by the husband and the wife. Keenly alive to their own interests, unscrupulous as the veriest trades-unionist in gaining their purpose, and not particularly honest, they can yet be honourable enough in their dealings, and though generally faithful to their master, be he white or black, they can at times, if it suits their purpose, desert him in his direst extremity. They have all the cunning so abundantly inherent in the character of low races, coupled with the greatest of good-nature, a potent dislike of labour, and an amount of courage which is not sufficiently remarkable to call for notice. Loads are carried in oblong baskets woven of cane, and borne on the back by means of three straps of rushes, one passing over each shoulder, and the other across the forehead. Rude and uncultivated in many things, they are not without etiquette. The head chief's approach is heralded by the ringing of the "Kando," or sacred bell, and each person whom he meets is saluted by him in a peculiar manner, known as "Kombo." The main feature of this salutation consists in an excessive depreciation of himself in a speech not particularly distinguished for intelligibility. Their villages are neat, cleanly, and well-kept. Paths pass from one to another, and in the vicinity of each hamlet are pieces of cultivated ground, on which plantains, yams, sugar-canes, tobacco, and other common West African plants are grown.

Palm-wine is freely drunk, and a kind of intoxication—or rather temporary madness—allied to that produced in the East by haschish or bang (*Cannabis sativa var. indica*), is obtained by smoking a species of Indian hemp (*Cannabis*), called "diamba," the intoxicating preparation being known as "maconie," and "makiah."

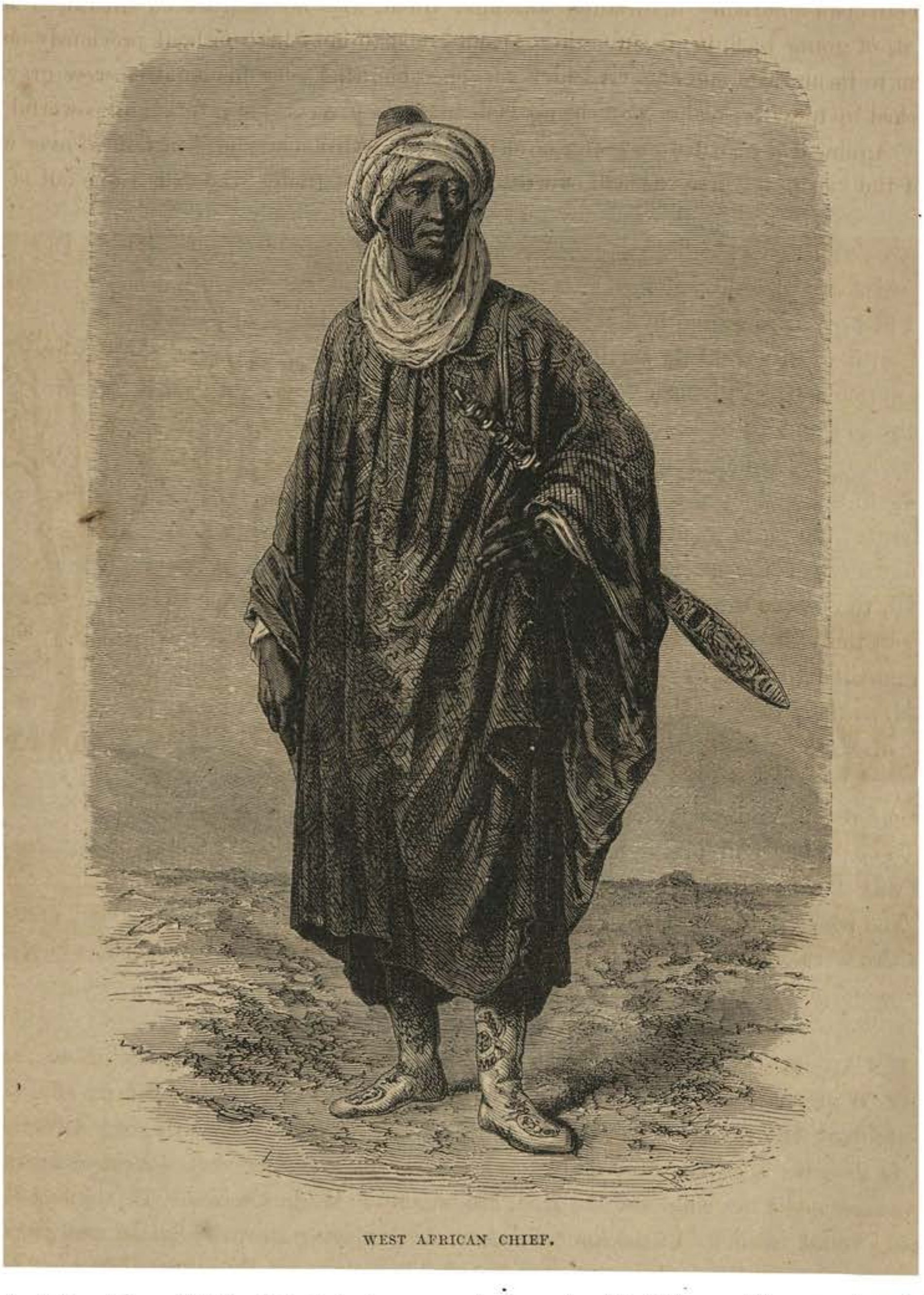
Slavery exists among them, but it is scarcely slavery as we understand the term. It is rather the fealty which one village or set of men owns to their suffragan. For instance, villages will be found in which all are slaves, and the chief himself is a "slave," who owns a filial obedience to some more powerful neighbouring chief. To do so is considered in no way degrading.

Their doctors are generally selected from other tribes, it being believed that their fetish is much more powerful than that of a native practitioner. His treatment is generally rather heroic, consisting of severe scarifications, rubbing capsicum juice into the raw wounds, and so on. Fetishism flourishes luxuriantly amongst them, and no man would dream, if he could afford it, of going to hunt, or any other serious occupation of life, without previously obtaining a charm to insure him success. A chief so venerable, that even his children were grey-haired, was looked up to with great respect, being believed to be possessed of a fetish all powerful against death. Again, if a man before going on a trading expedition washes himself all over with the juice of the "oloumi" tree, he will overreach the sharpest trader who ever came out of Boston town, U.S.A. Hence, as "smart" chapmen are rather abundant along the shores and river banks of West Africa, it is difficult to find an "oloumi" tree in the vicinity of a village in which the bark has not been torn off in order to make this success-bringing decoction. An ordeal to discover a criminal is also in vogue, but as it differs very considerably from any hitherto mentioned, we may describe it in the words of M. du Chaillu. This ordeal is that of the "ring boiled in oil." A man has been accused of injuring another's canoe, and preparations are made to discover the guilty party. "The Ashira doctor set three little billets of bar-wood in the ground with their ends together, then piled some smaller pieces between them, until all were laid as high as the three pieces. A native pot half full of palm-oil was set upon the wood, and the oil was set on fire. When it burned up brightly, a brass ring from the doctor's hand was cast into the pot. The doctor stood by with a little vase full of grass, soaked in water, of



WEST AFRICAN VILLAGE.

which he threw in now and then some bits. This made the oil blaze up afresh. At last all was burnt out, and now came the trial. The accuser, the little boy, was required to take the ring out of the top. He hesitated, but was pushed on by his father. The people cried out, 'Let us see if he lied or told the truth.' Finally he put his hand in, seized the red-hot ring, but quickly dropped it, having severely burnt his fingers. At this there was a shout, 'He lied! He lied' and the Goumbi [Camma] man was declared innocent."


WEST AFRICAN CHIEF.

In disposing of the dead, like the Apingi, they adopt the custom of exposing the body in the open air. When the chief Olenda died, he was "buried" after this fashion. Shots were fired, as is now the almost universal custom in West Africa, over his grave, and the relatives came and begged of Du Chaillu an umbrella to bury with him, this being thought a very necessary and desirable article to lay beside so eminent a man. The outward grief of the people was extreme. "The women shaved their heads, dressed themselves in rags, and besmeared their bodies with ashes; and as the body was carried out of the village, cries of anguish and lamentation were heard, all the people shouting out, 'He will not take care of us any more—he will not speak to us any more. Oh, Olenda, why have you left us! Oh, Olenda, why have you left us!' Two days afterwards I went myself to the cemetery. The corpse of the old chief was placed on the ground, in a sitting posture, enveloped in a large European coat which I had given him, and by his side was the umbrella; the head looked already like a skull, covered with dry, wrinkled, parchment-like skin. By his side lay a chest containing the various presents I had given him, and also plates, jugs, cooking utensils, his favourite pipe, and some tobacco; and a fire was kept burning, which the people keep alight day and night by the corpse of a chief, sometimes for many weeks. There was also a plate of victuals, brought, according to the custom of these people, for the corpse to eat, and renewed daily for some time. The aspect of the place was not cheering, as may well be imagined. All around lay the bones of the ancestors of the Ademba chief, in various stages of decay. For several mornings after his burial, the people came to me and declared that they had seen Olenda the previous evening walking in the village, and that he had told them that he had not left them entirely, but would come from time to time to see how they were going on. I have no doubt they believed what they said, as their imaginations were greatly excited during this dreadful period." Small-pox was the disease of which he died. It was now ravaging the whole Ashira country, and as a specimen of how this terrible plague decimates a savage people, we may quote Du Chaillu's description of the Ashira country during the progress of the disease :—

"The once cheerful prairie of Ashira had now become a gloomy valley of the dead; each village was a charnel-house. Wherever I walked, the most heartrending sights met my view. The poor victims of the loathsome disease in all its worst stages lay about in sheds and huts; there were hideous sores filled with maggots, and swarms of carrion flies buzzed about the living but putrid carcases. The stench in the neighbourhood of the huts was insupportable. Some of the sick were raving, and others emaciated, with sunken eyes, victims of hunger as well as of disease. Many wretched creatures from other villages were abandoned to die in the bush."* Owing to the contact of civilisation, which, in consequence of the proximity of the traders, is gradually infringing on them, many of the old Ashira customs are getting modified or entirely abolished. Dirty cotton garments are now taking the place of the elegant grass-cloth "dengui." Copper rings around the neck are beginning to be eschewed by all but the older women. Commi fashions in dressing the hair are supplementing the native method, and the young folks are now abandoning the practice of filing the teeth. All these customs will still more gain ground now that the Commis and Bakalai warriors are marrying Ashira women. On the whole, civilisation and foreign customs are not sitting very kindly on them, and the general impression which our traveller received on his second visit to them was, that they were sadly deteriorating. Industry and cleanliness have been replaced by idleness and dirt. These two vices will alone bring plenty more in their train.

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* "A Journey to Ashango-Land," p. 134.

Plantains form the chief article of food among these people, and being weighty to carry, the porters who accompanied Du Chaillu preferred to run the risk of starvation rather than encumber themselves with more than three or four days' rations. In the vicinity of the chief villages great groves of the plantain are found. In one Du Chaillu enumerates 30,000 trees, most of them planted five feet apart. Each tree would bear on an average half a dozen shoots. Each of these shoots would in time grow into trees, did the natives allow them. But they generally cut off all except two or three. Each tree will bear plantains to the weight of twenty or thirty pounds, and, in extraordinary instances, a bunch will weigh from eighty to one hundred and twenty pounds. The plantain is thus infinitely more plentiful as a food-supplier than any form of cereal.

GENERAL REMARKS ON THE TRIBES OF WESTERN EQUATORIAL AFRICA.

In concluding this brief sketch of the tribes enumerated in the preceding pages, we may again glean from the works of M. du Chaillu a few general remarks bearing on the tribes as a whole. What strikes the traveller in these interior regions is the primitive nature of the savages. Here and there, when they come in contact with the traders and the trading tribes, they have been altered in some respects; but, as a rule, the tribes which, in that unceasing instinct for migration westward, reach the sea, never return to civilise the race they have left behind. The path is closed behind them, and the wondrous tale of the white man, his ways of life, his muskets, and his looking-glasses, never reach the tribes in the interior except as vague rumours, or through the medium of middlemen oft repeated, and as wild as themselves.

Everywhere the population is scanty, and the great numbers of separate tribes speaking distinct languages and dialects seem to point to these being only remnants of what were once much more numerous and powerful races. The farther the traveller advances towards the east, the less he finds the people travel, and the less they know of the tribes which surround them.

All these tribes, nevertheless, present affinities to each other. All are governed on the patriarchal system: every village by its chief, and further in the interior by an elder, who with his people have a separate part of the village to themselves. He was the *ifoumou*—the "source," or "father," of the clan. Question the natives as to how they originally split up into these tribes, and they answer only by a vacant stare. They know nothing of it; it has not entered into their traditions. In interior Western Equatorial Africa there are not, as in East Africa, kings who have obtained power over large tracts of country; and the house of a chief, or an elder, is in no way better than that of the meanest of his tribesmen. It is a democratic form of government. No chief has the power of life and death. This lies in the hands of the Council of Elders. Before a man can lose his life or liberty, a very long palaver must be held; so that, altogether, take one case with another, about as fair justice is meted out by the African jury as by the English one. A tooth for a tooth, an eye for an eye, is their maxim; and this being so, all the intricacies and quibbles of the law, as understoood and interpreted in civilised communities, are unknown to them. Accidents are no excuses for any crime. If a man's gun goes off by accident and kills another, the owner of the gun is held as responsible as if he had taken it up and deliberately killed his victim. If a tree which a man is hewing falls and kills another, the axeman expiates his unfortunate mishap by his life. The line of reasoning is, that the person who causes an accident is possessed of witchcraft, and therefore must be got rid of. Any man may kill his slaves; but no man has a right, of his own will, to put to death a *free* man. Yet if a person incurs the hatred of the head of a family, sooner or later he is doomed. He is accused of witchcraft, subject to the ordeal, or in one way or another so implicated, that he may consider himself fortunate if he saves his life by the alternative of being sold into slavery. A father of a family is rarely compelled to drink the *m'boundou*, or ordeal; but he can compel, either by his influence, or by exciting the superstitious fears of the people, any of his tribesmen to do so. Every man is under the protection of some one more powerful. A Negro in Western Equatorial Africa, if left alone, runs a great risk of being sold into slavery, A palaver is held, and if he has not some one powerful enough to speak for him, the chances are that some of the endless excuses, which never fail the West African native attorney, will be found for depriving him of his liberty. All a man has to do to place himself under the protection of an elder, is to perform *bola banda*—that is, to place his hands on the patriarch's head; henceforth he becomes one of his people, and is entitled to his protection. The man under whose protection another places himself must belong to another tribe or clan.

In this region the villages are not continually at war with other villages, as among the Bakalai, Shekiani, and Fans. No village is strong enough to plunder another; accordingly no raids are made simply for the sake of "loot." On the contrary, the people intermarry with each other, and a friendly feeling prevails among the inhabitants of different villages, whom the prevalence of polygamy thus unites. We find, however, amongst them the widely-prevailing law, that people of the same class cannot marry with each other. "The least consanguinity is considered an abomination; nevertheless, the nephew has not the slightest objection to take his uncle's wives, and, as among the Bakalai, the son to take his father's wives, except his own mother." In East Africa the chiefs are powerful, unscrupulous, tyrannical, and cruel, exercising indiscriminate rights over the lives and property of their subjects. In West Africa, with the exception of the powerful kingdoms of Ashanti and Dahomey, the difference is marked in the extreme, as we have seen from the preceding remarks. The wealth of a man consists first in his wives, secondly in his slaves; but he can exercise no property in slaves belonging to the same tribe with himself.

The religion of all these tribes is much the same. Fetishism in one form or another is the universal worship. Mohammedanism, which possesses such a charm for some of the northern interior natives,* has never yet penetrated the vast jungles of Western Africa. The fear of witchcraft is the one all-possessing fear which troubles the minds of the people, and is a cause of endless woe, misery, murder, and robbery amongst them. The doctors of both East and

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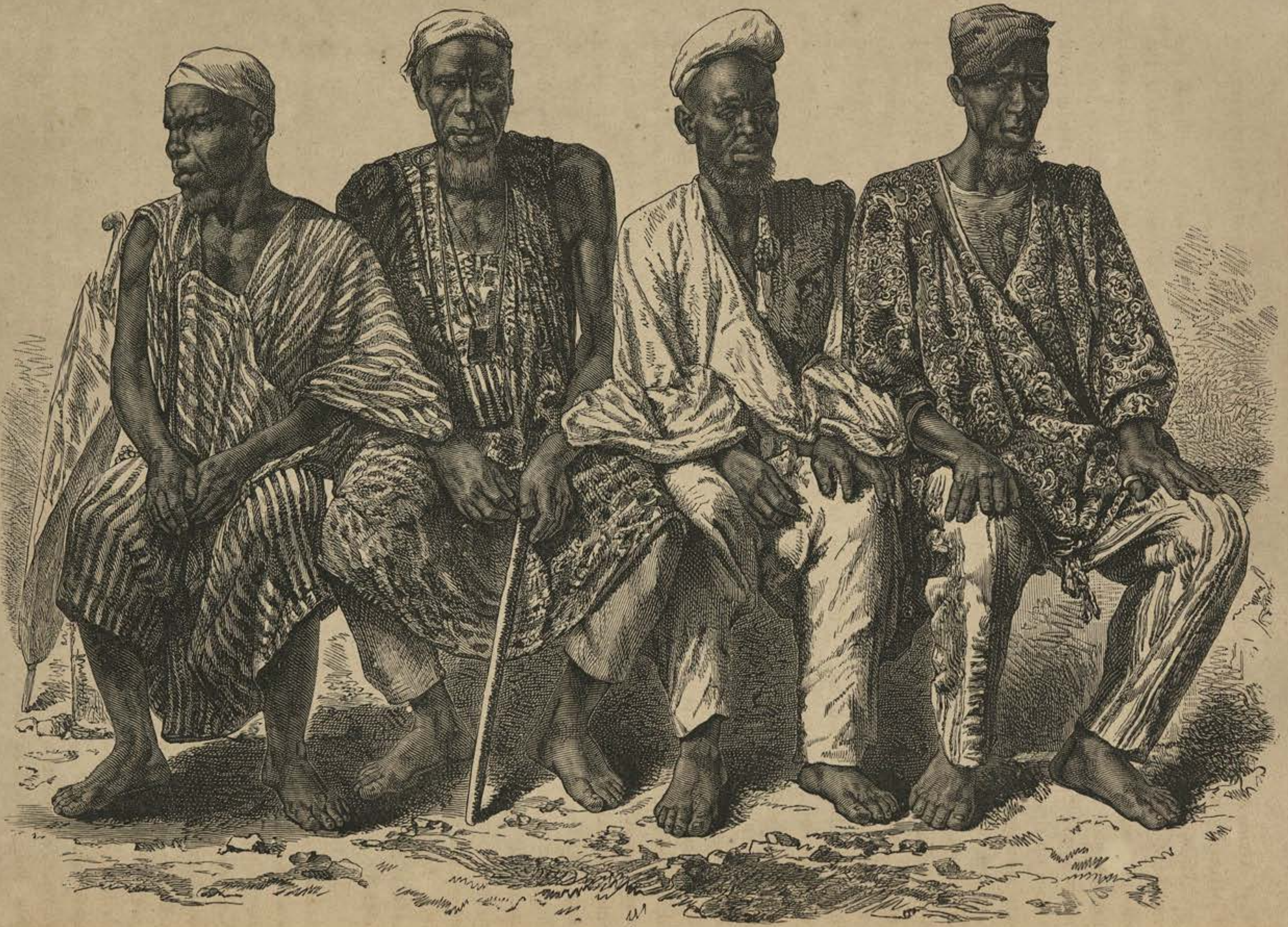
* From the latest accounts King M'Tessa, whose despotic court the reader must remember (p. 24), has, with all his people, become Mohammedans. He does not appear, however, to have greatly improved in character with his change of faith, for he almost daily ordered the execution of numbers of his hapless subjects, in honour of the visit of Colonel Long, of Gordon's Expedition, to whom we are indebted for the most recent news of this famous potentate ("Proc. Roy. Geog. Soc.," Jan. 11th, 1875).



BAMBARA PILGRIMS.

West Africa exercise their functions in a similar manner, and, indeed, are called in both regions of Africa by much the same names—Ouganga, Uganga, Mganga, or Nganga.

Among all of them the law of inheritance is the same. The next brother inherits the wealth of the eldest, whether this consists in women, slaves, or whatever else; but if the youngest dies the eldest inherits his property, and if there are no brothers, then the nephew becomes heir to it. The headship of the clan is hereditary, following the same law as that of inheritance. Suppose all the brothers have died, the eldest son of the eldest sister is the heir, and it goes on thus until the whole branch is exterminated, for it is considered that all the clans have sprung from the female side. "What struck me also," writes Du Chaillu, "was that at each step occasioned by death the heir changes his name. The chief of the Abouya clan of the Commi was formerly called Oganda, then his next brother was called Quengueza, and another Kombé-Niavi, names which my friend Quengueza had successively borne, being now called Oganda, and no one would dare to call him by the name of Quengueza. The title is generally assumed after the *bola ivoga* has taken place. On my second journey, Obindji, the Bakalai chief was called Ratenou, having taken the name of his father—the Bakalai, as far as I know, being the only tribe among which the son inherits his father's property."

No tribe south of the equator is known to indulge in cannibalism. The Fans are the only ones known to be anthropophagists, though they say that all the people to the north-east, throughout an unknown area, also eat human flesh.

Everywhere the population is steadily decreasing, and has been going on long before the white men ever reached the Coast. Clans have in a few years entirely disappeared, and in other cases only a few individuals have remained out of what were at one time considerable tribes. Since the advent of the whites this depopulation has, of course, much increased. The slave trade, and the rum, which forms one of the staples of the African commerce, have been two of the great agents in thinning the population. Polygamy, barrenness of the women, death among the children, plagues, and the incessant murders and judicial assassinations which follow in the train of a belief in witchcraft, are also helping to decimate the prolific West African race. Witchcraft, Du Chaillu declares, has carried off more people than even the slave trade did. Everywhere in Africa the same decrease is going on, and in another chapter (XII.) I may have to consider some of the causes of this decrease, difficult though it is to arrive at any settled conclusions in regard to it.

In vain does the traveller search for any remains of a higher civilisation. On the contrary, everything shows that at one time they were in a lower state of barbarism than even now, and at one time did not know the art of forging iron, as the flint implements dug up in the "kjokkenmöddings," or refuse heaps, of some portions of West Africa clearly prove. The Negroes are a people of great antiquity, and the period when they used stone weapons must have been very remote, as their traditions afford not the slightest clue to the period when the loom was invented, or as to the individual who first struck upon the art of smelting and forging iron. It may be, therefore, reasonably hoped that in time he may attain a still higher grade of civilisation, and become, if not an ornament of the "commonwealth of nations," at least a more useful member of society than he at present is, or has at any former period been. But it is only a dream of men of long-enduring hopes, and may never be accomplished, if even the race lived long enough to allow of its accomplishment.

CHAPTER X.

KROOMEN, ANGOLESE, CONGOESE, AND MANDINGOES.

To enumerate, far less to describe, all the known tribes of Africa, would be a task at once beyond our powers and our desire to perform. We might as well, for all the benefit gained by it, describe in detail the manners and customs of the people of every English county; or probably every English parish would be nearer the correct simile. No doubt we should find something distinctive in the ways, superstitions, and domestic rites of each locality, but the task would not be equalled by the variety of information acquired. There would be a similarity between Dorset and Devon, and Yorkshire would not differ sufficiently widely from Lancashire and Cumberland to make the labour, unless for purposes of pure ethnological comparison, repaid by the value of it. So is it with Africa. The tribes, even the nationalities, are numerous, but over great regions there is often such a similarity in their general habits and ways of life, that in any work, much less in one which only professes to be a "popular" one, and to give a mere sketch of the subject, it would be useless to the reader, and embarrassing to him in his studies, were we to go over the individual elements of the African Race with wearisome prolixity. Accordingly, this chapter will conclude our brief but yet comprehensive outline of African ethnography, and as specimens of the tribes left undescribed, in general, however, not of great importance, we shall take those which head it.

KROOMEN.

On board every vessel navigating the sea laving the shores of West Africa, specimens of this race may be found. They are the seamen, canoe-men, and porters of the Coast, the hewers of wood and drawers of water to the languid seamen, and about the only West African race which is at once able and willing to work either for the white man or for itself. Their homes may be found scattered all along what is known as the "Grain Coast," this name being applied, not, however, from the presence of any kind of cereal, but because it is the region from whence are exported cardamons, or grains of Paradise (*Amomum melegueta*). They are said to have originally come from the far interior, into which they stretch for some distance. Whether this is so or not—and there is great probability that, like many of the Coast tribes, they have originally pushed their way from the east—a number of small tribes have now merged into them, and, in course of time, owing to their habit of taking service on board the ships navigating the Coast, they have got partially civilised. They are excellent boatmen, and navigate, through the wild surf which lines the West African Coast like a wall, their long narrow canoes, with a skill which excites the admiration of all who have ever seen it. The general appearance of the Kroomen has been so graphically described by "F.R.G.S." (Captain Burton) that I may quote it. "Conceive," he says, "the head of a Socrates, or a Silenus, upon the body of the Antenons, or Apollo Belvedere. A more magnificent development of muscle, such perfect symmetry in the balance of grace and strength, my eyes had never yet looked upon. But the faces! Except when lighted up by smiles and good humour—expression to an African face is all in all—nothing could be more unprepossessing. The flat nose, the high cheek-bones, the yellow eyes, the chalky-white teeth, pointed like the shark's, the muzzle protruding like that of a dog-monkey, combine to form an unusual amount of ugliness. To this may be added the tribe-mark, a blue line of cuts half an inch broad, from the forehead scalp to the nose-tip; in some cases extending over both lips to the chin, whence they are called blue noses, whilst a broad arrow or wedge, pointed to the face, and also blue, occupies each temple, just above the zygomata. The marks are made with a knife, little cuts in which the oily husk of a gum is rubbed. Their bodies are similarly ornamented with stars, European emblems, as anchors, &c., especially with broad double lines down the breast and other parts. Their features are distinctly African, without a mixture of Arab; their conjunctiva is broad, yellow, or tarnished—a Hametic peculiarity—and some paint white goggle-like ovals round the orbits, producing the effect of a loup. This is sometimes done for sickness, and individuals are rubbed over with various light and dark coloured powders. The skin is very dark, and often lamp-black; others are of a deep rich brown, or bronze tint, but a light-complexioned man is generally termed Tom Coffee. They wear the hair, which is short and kinky, in crops, which look like a Buddha's skullcap, and they shave, when in mourning for their relations. A favourite 'fash' (*i.e.*, fashion) is to scrape off a parallelogram behind the head, from the pole to the cerebellum; and others are decorated in that landscape or pasture style which wilder Africans love. The back of the cranium is often remarkably flat, and I have seen many heads of the pyramidal shape, rising narrow, and pointed high to the apex. The beard is seldom thick and never long; the moustache is removed, and the pile, like the hair, often grows in tufts. The tattoo has often been described. There seems to be something attractive in this process. The English sailor can seldom resist the temptation. They also chip, sharpen, and extract their teeth. Most men cut out an inverted V between the two middle incisors of the upper jaw; some draw one or two of the central lower incisors; others, especially the St. Andrew's men, tip or sharpen the incisors, like the Wahiao and several Central African tribes.

"Odontology has its mysteries. Dentists seem, or rather seemed, to hold as a theory that destruction of the enamel involved the loss of the tooth. The Kroomen hack their masticators with a knife, a rough piece of hoop iron, and find that the sharpening, instead of producing caries, acts as a preservative, by facilitating the lavatory process. Similarly there are physiologists who attribute the preservation of the Negro's teeth to his drinking nothing hotter than blood heat. This is mere empiricism. The Arabs swallow their coffee nearly boiling, and the East African will devour his agali or porridge when the temperature would scald the hand. Yet both these races have pearly teeth, except when they chew lime or tobacco." On page 305, Vol. ii., is a sketch of a group such as may be seen freshly landed by a home-bound West African trader. The women are inferior to the men in personal appearance, albeit they are not particularly well favoured, as the reader will already have seen. The Kroomen are born sailors, and under fantastic names may be found, as we have already remarked, on board every ship navigating the Gold and neighbouring coasts. They are sometimes called the Scotchmen of Africa, for like that nation, and unlike the other African races, they never hesitate to leave their much loved country if thereby they see a chance of pushing their fortunes. Half the African seamen in Liverpool are Kroomen. For a vessel to halt for the purpose of taking on board its compliment of Kroomen is just as regular a practice as for a whaler to go to Lerwick to ship Shetlandmen for the northern cruise. Rice is about their only food on board ship. In the English war ships on the Coast many are employed. They work hard and live sparingly, so as to be able when they are discharged to go home, purchase a wife or two, and live like "Jack ashore" for a time, until their money is all spent, when they again ship in the first vessel which requires their services. Hence they say of themselves that they are "nigger for ship, king for country." On board the war vessels they usually ship for a term of three years. Longer than this period they do not usually care to serve, as by this time their longing for "me country" has got so unbearable that they must once again taste the delights of shore life. Their government is strictly republican, and there is even a sort of communism which prevents one of the elders of the tribe from holding much more property than the average of those around him. They are, it may be added, much attached to their parents.

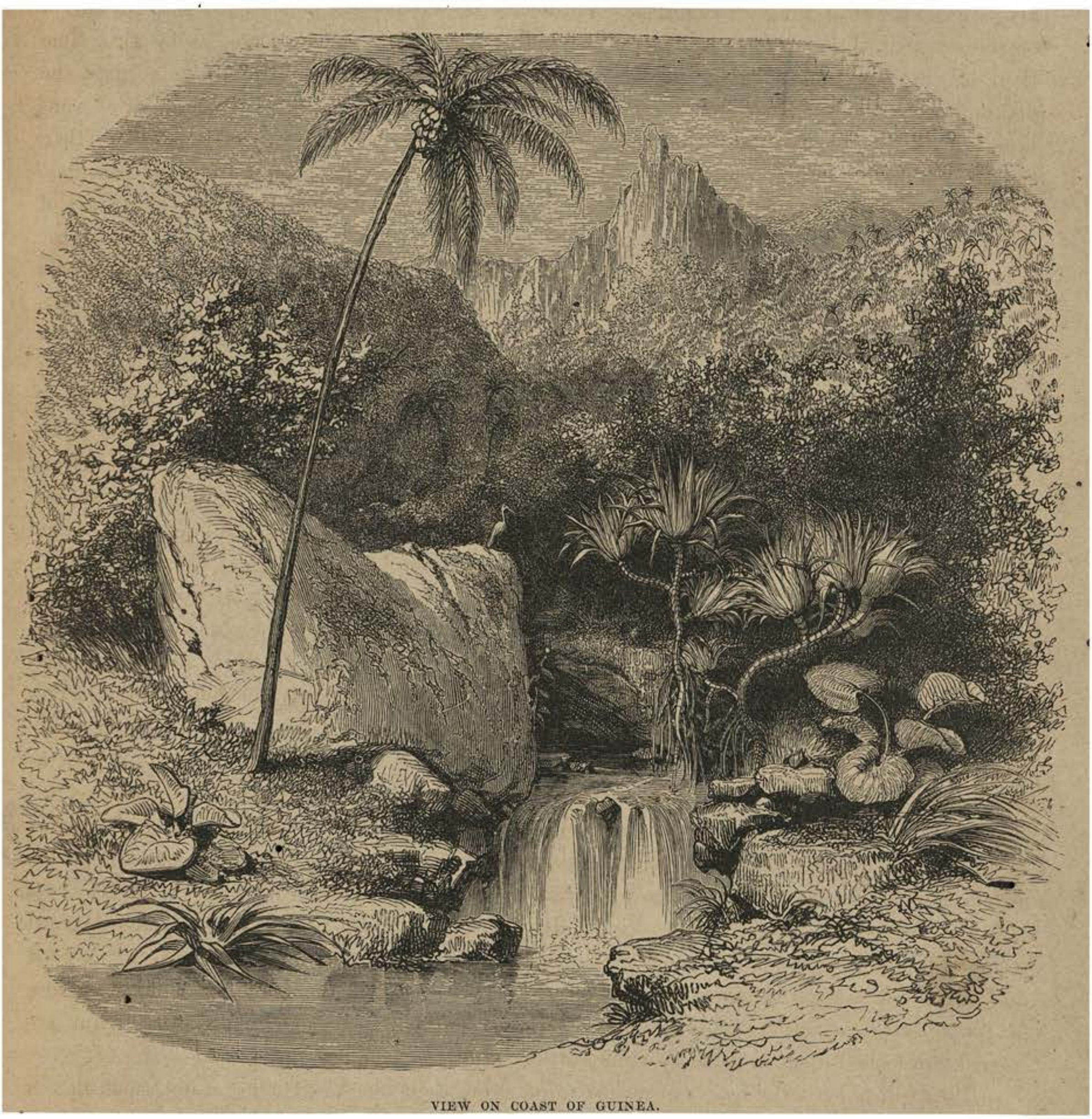
Witchcraft is firmly believed in, and all suspected persons are tried by the ordeal of drinking a decoction of "sassywood," prepared from the "godden tree" (p. 133); but if the person accused recovers after drinking the ordeal, then Kroomen law ordains that the accuser himself must drink the poisonous draught.

They are a merry set of fellows, and no matter how hard has been the day's work, they will end it by shouting and dancing to their hearts' content, under the name of "making play." As a set-off to their light-heartedness, they are notorious drunkards, liars, and such thieves that they are said to be quite capable of saving the capsized traveller struggling in the waves with one hand, while with the other they are adroitly picking his pockets. There are no laws against polygamy. A man may marry as many wives as he likes, provided he has the means wherewith to pay for them. To pay for her and take her home is the sum total of the marriage ceremony amongst them. The more wives a man has the easier is his life. Hence the object in marrying many wives is as a sort of provision for old age. He invests his spare capital in wives, and finds his return in them working for him. Even the older wives have no objection to his introducing rivals into the family. The first "married" wife is always the head of the house, and rules the other wives with a high hand. Accordingly the more junior wives her husband has, the more servants she has under her to obey her behests. If a wife is badly treated she can take refuge with her relations, when a "big palaver" ensues. When, as sometimes happens, the case goes against the husband, then the children go to him as his share of the family property. When a Krooman marries his first wife, he takes up his quarters in her father's house; when he is able to buy a few more he commences housekeeping on his own account, and then each wife has a separate hut for her own use.

They have little religion of any kind. By long contact with the whites they have learned to give up many of their old superstitions, and they have adopted little in their place. A good deal of the old religion, common to all West Africa, still remains amongst them. Fetishes are, of course, an institution; and demons, to whom offerings of beads, tobacco, and rum are offered, are looked upon in some quarters with great awe.

They will not eat the hearts of animals, nor drink their blood. Though a notorious liar in the ordinary walks of life, yet on high occasions a Krooman considers his word binding if fortified by an oath, made in the following manner. He dips one of his fingers in salt, points first to the sky, then to the earth (as if invoking heavenly power to witness the act), and finally puts the tip of the finger into the mouth. This oath is looked upon as of considerable force, and is not usually broken, unless under circumstances of great temptation.

After a Krooman dies, a fire is kept up beside his house, and food is placed beside his grave; both the fire and the food being intended for the use of the spirit either before, or while it is journeying, to the land of the hereafter. Cattle are also sacrificed at his funeral, for he will take rank in the land of spirits in exact proportion to the amount of property with which he enters it. How otherwise is his former condition in Kroomen's land to be known? Sometimes he will return to earth—his soul having entered into a little child. This is only, however, if he has been a good man. If a bad one—a wizard practising the black art illegally, for example —he is doomed to wander through dismal swamps and dreary wastes for an indefinite period. No man, however, enters into the land of spirits all at once; there is a transitionary purgatory



VIEW ON COAST OF GUINEA.

through which he must pass. This is Kwiga Oran, or the City of Ghosts. In it the best of men must pass a certain time, before the gates of the Krooman paradise open to him.

Such are the Kroomen, one of the semi-civilised African races—indeed, one of the best. Such another are the Housas, who are not, however, labourers, but professional soldiers. They come from the Housa country, near Bornu, and are mustered into military corps for service on the Gold Coast and elsewhere. Many were employed in the late Ashanti war, where they did good service. In religion they are Mohammedans; and beyond the facts stated, are of little interest ethnologically. Of more interest are the less civilised Angolese, about whom we may now say a few words.

ANGOLESE.

Angola, either in its geography or ethnology, is popularly little remembered, except by the fact that a variety of cat, supposed to come from this region, is found on certain domestic hearths. It is a large region skirting the Coast, and stretching for a considerable distance into the interior. Its capital is San Paolo de Loando, and for long it has been a colony of the Portuguese, whose influence on the natives has been such that but few of their original customs now remain to record.

In complexion the natives are not black, but lightish brown; their lips not very thick; their nose rather aquiline and high, with the Negro-like breadth at the base; and the hair, though woolly, is longer than is usual with the true Negro, from whom they differ in appearance rather widely; a fact which, in some cases, must be attributed to the partiality of the Angolese ladies for husbands of the conquering Latin race!

Their chiefs are elected from certain families, and inheritance goes not to the son but to the eldest brother of the deceased. If a man dies, his children belong to his widow's eldest brother, who is perfectly at liberty to provide for them—as he not unfrequently does—by disposing of them to the slave-trader.

Manioc roots form the chief portion of the food of the Angolese. Superstition, notwithstanding their long intercourse with the Portuguese, is still as rampant amongst them as ever. The poison ordeal, so universal in West Africa, is also in use; and, as elsewhere, destroys many victims every year. It is, however, only administered at one spot on the banks of the Dua. The spirits of the dead, as is also believed by the Kaffirs and other natives, are considered to extend their influence over the living long after the dead have left the earth. Sacrifices are accordingly offered to the spirits to secure their goodwill, or to obviate the effects of the malice excited against those whom they hate. It is even said that human sacrifices are, in most portions of the country, offered up to these spirits in order to obviate sickness and other calamities which they bring on suffering mortals. Marriage ceremonies are very elaborate, and male children are those chiefly desired; a woman who has never presented her husband with a son being looked down upon by the whole tribe. A funeral is celebrated by a great feast, much yelling and drum-beating, and as much drunkenness as the liquor at the command of the relatives will supply. They are fond of burying the dead at cross-roads. Around the grave euphorbias (p. 173) are planted, and articles of domestic use laid on it, in accordance with a custom which, we have seen, is widely spread among savage and barbarous people all over the world.

"When the natives turn their eyes to the future world," writes Dr. Livingstone, to whom we are indebted for the few facts regarding the Angolese introduced into the preceding paragraphs, "they have a view cheerless enough of their own utter helplessness and hopelessness. They fancy themselves completely in the power of disembodied spirits, and look upon the prospect of following them as the greatest of misfortunes. Hence, they are constantly deprecating the wrath of departed souls, believing that if they are appeased there is no other cause of death but witchcraft, which may be averted by charms. The whole of the coloured population of Angola are sunk in their gross superstitions; but have the opinion, notwithstanding, that they are wiser in these matters than their white neighbours. Each tribe has a consciousness of following its own best interests in the best way. They are by no means destitute of that self-esteem which is so common in other nations; yet they fear all manner of phantoms, and have half-developed ideas and traditions of something or other, they know not what. The pleasures of animal life are ever present to their mind as the supreme good; and, but for the innumerable invisibilities, they might enjoy their luxurious climate as much as it is possible for man to do. I have often thought, in travelling through their land, that it presents pictures of beauty which angels might enjoy. How often have I beheld, in still mornings, scenes the very essence of beauty, and all bathed in a quiet air of delicious warmth! yet the occasional soft motion imparted a pleasing sensation of coolness as of afar. Green grassy meadows, the cattle feeding, the goats browsing, the kids skipping; the groups of herdsmen, with miniature bows, arrows, and spears; the women wending their way to the river, with water-pots poised jauntily on their heads; men sewing under the shady banians; and old, grey-headed fathers sitting on the ground, with staff in hand, listening to the morning gossip; while others carry trees or branches to repair their hedges. And all this—flooded with the bright African sunshine, and the birds singing among the branches before the heat of the day has become intense—forms pictures which can never be forgotten." *Mutatis mutandis*, the description might apply to savage life in any of the sub-tropical regions of the world.

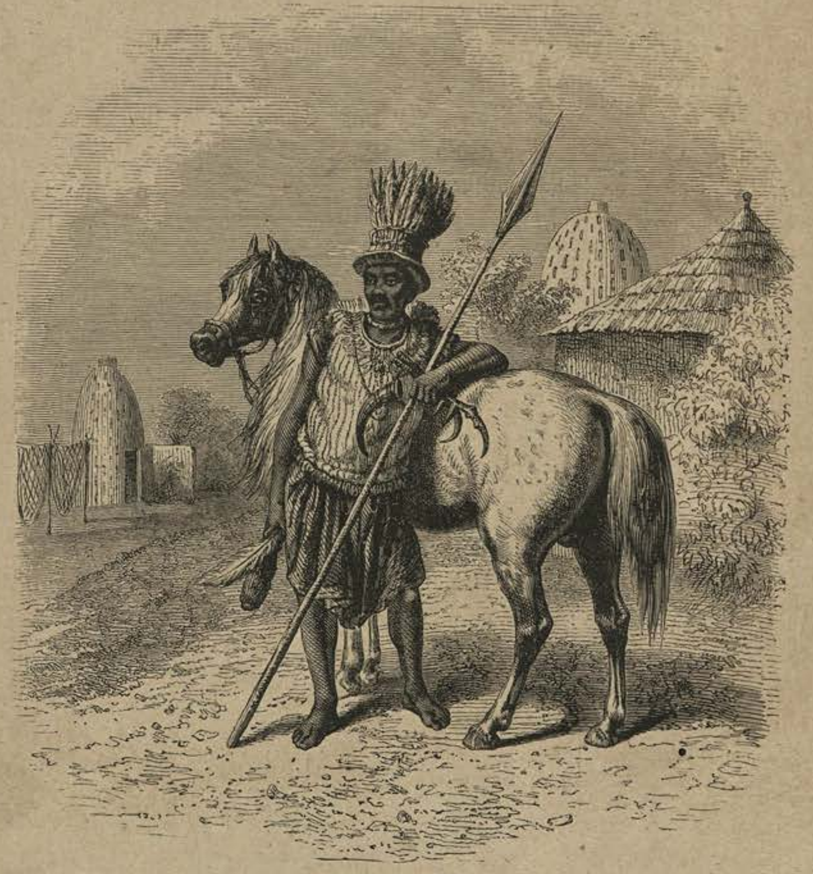
East of Angola lies the country of Balonda, many of the habits of the natives of which are similar to those of Angola.; but we have already, in our account of the Central Africans, noted a few of these. We will, therefore, turn to another people, whose name is much more familiar in Europe, namely—

THE CONGOESE.

At one time there was no more famous kingdom in all Africa than that of Congo. It was something even on a grander scale than is nowadays Ashanti or Dahomey—which have sprung up within the last 200 years, during which the empire of Congo has been broken up into many a petty principality. The writings of the old Jesuit and Capuchin Fathers teem with tales of its grandeur; and though the reader may be warned that these accounts are not to be implicitly relied on, yet though the country has been traversed and retraversed since those days, we have no other accounts of the ancient state of the country to go upon, and very little better materials from which to draw up a description of Congo and the Congoese in modern times.

When the king was elected he came out of the palace, glorious in trinkets, to give the benediction to his people, assembled from far and near in the palace square, for this important event. The priests and nobles arranged themselves around him. The king exhorted the people to be faithful and obedient, and, after the manner of monarchs generally, assured his subjects of his profound consideration. "He rises, and all the people prostrate themselves before him. He stretches his hands over them, and makes gestures with his fingers without uttering a word." Shouts of joy, followed by firing of muskets and a "jubilee of banquets," close this initiatory event of the Congo monarch's reign.

The king was a despot, simply controlled by his ministers. His civil list consisted of tribute paid him by the sub-chiefs or vassal-lords, who in their turn ground it out of the people. When he found it necessary to levy a special tax, he would go out of the palace with his cap loosely placed on his head. When the wind blew it off, he would rush into the house as if in a great passion, and immediately order the levy of goats, fowls, slaves, and palm-wine. The Negro is a systematic creature in some things; he does nothing without a reason, and the Congoese monarch therefore considered that he had justified his acts in the eyes of his subjects by his dignity being offended owing to his cap blowing off.

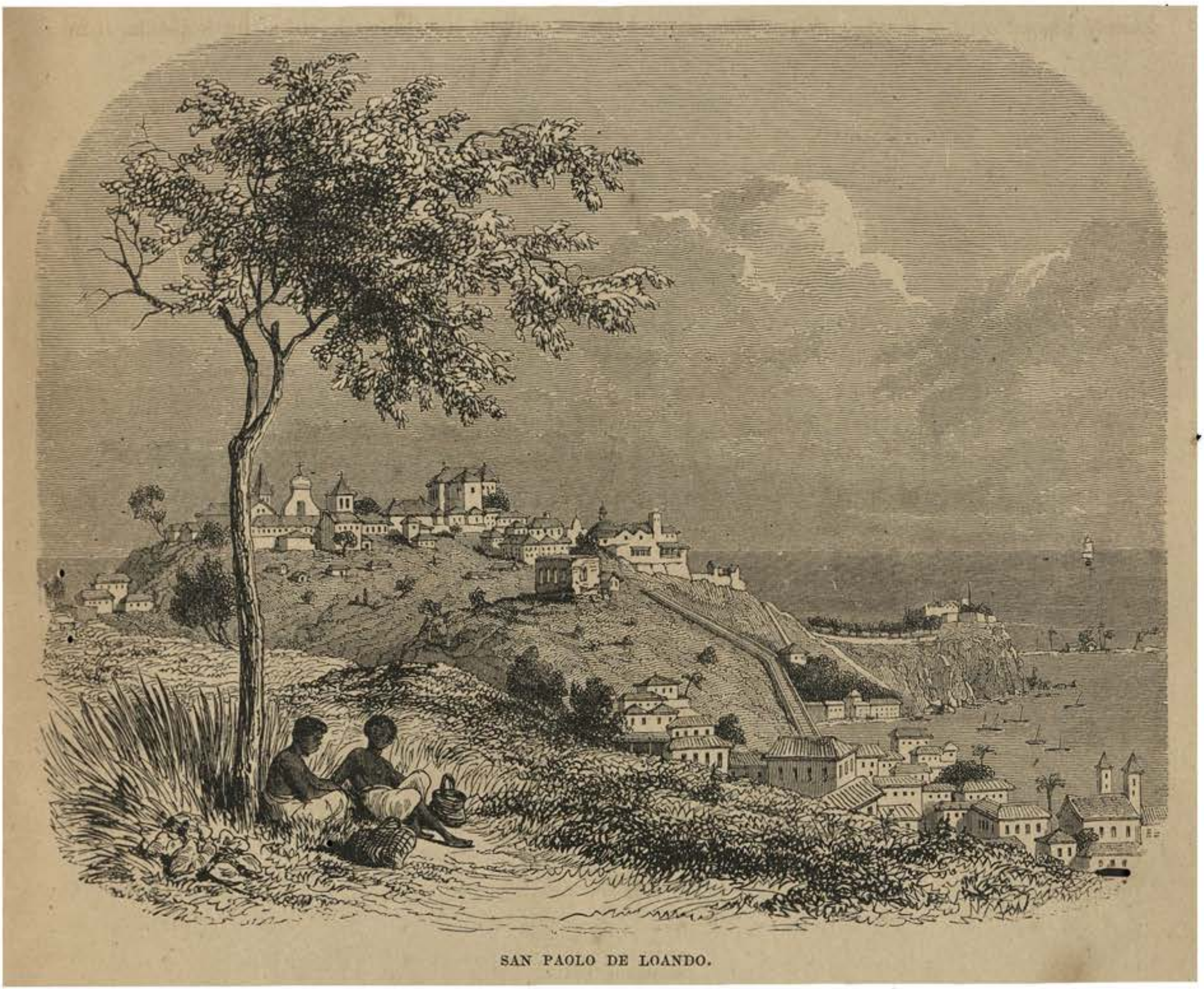


MOUSGOU CHIEF.

One of the taxes was levied on beds—a slave the span's breadth being the rate at which the impost was made. This tax was devoted to the support of the king's concubines, and as a broad bed entailed considerable expense on its owner, the possession of this piece of chamber furniture was in Congo looked upon as the sign of a man of wealth.

When the king desired a fresh concubine a married woman was selected, her husband and the lovers whom she confessed to (for it seemed that they all have them, married or single) being put to death. These little preliminaries being completed, she entered the royal seraglio, where much more liberty than would be granted in Mohammedan kingdoms was allowed to her. On the king's death all his wives were buried with him.

No man dare see the king eat or drink. All this must be done in privacy. If a dog even entered the house while this august sovereign was at food it was killed; and a case is recorded by our authorities in which the king ordered the execution of his own son, who had accidentally seen him drink palm-wine. The reader may remember that a similar superstition or a piece of etiquette was observed by the King of Dahomey, though apparently no punishment attended on the person who observed that monarch drink (p. 106). Indeed, the concealment seemed almost a form—a sort of remnant handed down to modern times of something which was much more important in more ancient times. The large army supported by the Congoese monarch was officered by their own lords, and apparently fought under a kind of feudal system.



SAN PAOLO DE LOANDO.

The civil judges sat under trees, each having a large staff in his hand, as an insignium of office. Incorruptible they were not, but still no one ever appealed against their decisions, and it is said never even complained of their injustice; but this is not in human nature, and must only mean that no one was ever heard to do so in public, and that for very special private reasons of his own. Ordeals of various kinds were also in use. They believed in one supreme being, and a host of minor deities. The chief priest was a pontiff in the state, feared even by the king himself, while by the populace the "Chitomé" was looked upon almost as a god. Each family paid him the firstfruits of its harvest, and his diet consisted of delicate fishes and small animals, the offerings of the fishermen and hunters. In his house burnt a sacred fire, which was never allowed to be extinguished, and the embers of which were sold at an enormous price. To approach this pontiff's house without having some business of importance, and, above all, without a present in hand, was looked upon as an unpardonable offence. The king, on his election, used to visit this holy man, give him many presents, and do reverence to his person, swearing at the same time obedience to him. Pages might be filled with descriptions of the awe in which the Chitomé was held, and the respect paid to him; but his end must need approach, like that of common mortals. It was, however, a belief that if the Chitomé died a natural death, the universe would be demolished. Accordingly, when his illness seemed fatal, the priest who had been appointed to succeed him entered his house, and then and there brained him with a club, or strangled him with a bowstring.

Next in rank to the Chitomé came the Nghombo. For this ecclesiastical dignitary to walk upright would have been esteemed derogatory to his mightiness. Accordingly, when he appeared in public he walked on his hands, with his feet upright in the air; and though this attitude may seem rather inelegant and awkward, through long practice the Nghombo was enabled to walk with the greatest ease, and considerable celerity.

Congo women are not better treated than women elsewhere in Africa. Indeed, it is said that one of the greatest marks of affection which a husband can bestow on his wife, is in the shape of a good horse-whipping; and that a Congo wife considers herself very badly used, and her relatives remonstrate with the husband, if she does not receive due chastisement at regular intervals! A woman may, or might—for I am speaking of the past—ascend the throne; and one such case is known. Shinga was the name of the Negro queen. She came to power in the year 1640; but through the intrigues of the Jesuit priests, to whose rites she did not choose to submit, was forced to fly the kingdom, after contending with her nephew in three pitched battles, which she lost. In 1646 she regained her kingdom, after many vicissitudes of fortune. But by this time Queen Shinga had got so accustomed to war, that she cared for nothing else. Her life was spent in hostilities against the neighbouring kingdoms. "Before she undertook any new enterprise, she would sacrifice the handsomest man she could find. Clad in skins, with a sword hanging round her neck, an axe at her side, and bow and arrow in her hand, she would dance and sing, striking two iron bells. Then taking a feather she would put it through the holes in her nose, as a sign of war, would cut off the victim's head with her sword, and drink a deep draught of his blood. She kept fifty or sixty male concubines; and while she always dressed herself as a man, they were compelled to take the names and garments of women. If one of them denied that he was a woman he was immediately killed. The queen, however, was charitable enough to let them belie their words by their actions. They might have as many wives as they chose; but if a child was born, the husband was compelled to kill it with his own hands."

The Jagas are a race now settled in the Congo country, into which they seem originally to have entered as marauders or conquerors. In the early state of the kingdom they were ruled by Tembandumba—a queen whose excesses, if not exaggerated in the narrative, seem demoniacal in their extent. She soon, by her exploits in war, made herself feared and respected by enemies and subjects; but so terrible were her cruelties and tyranny, that only the awe in which she was held prevented her subjects rebelling. She had a host of lovers, all of whom, one after the other, she killed with the most cruel tortures as soon as she had tired of them. Breaking loose from all her relatives—who had ventured to remonstrate with her—she founded a constitution which only a woman, and one willing to proceed to those extremes of which the sex is capable, could have imagined. "She would turn," writes Mr. Winwood Reade, whose abridgment of the Jesuit narrative we have followed, "the world into a wilderness; she would kill all living animals; she would burn all forests, grass, and vegetable food. The sustenance of her subjects should be the flesh of man; his blood should be their drink. She commanded all male children, all twins, and all infants whose upper teeth appeared before their lower ones, should be killed by their own mothers. From their bodies an ointment should be made, in the way she would show. The female children should be reared, and instructed in war; and male prisoners, before being killed and eaten, should be used for the purpose of procreation. Having concluded her harangue, with the publication of other laws of minor importance, this young woman seized her child, which was feeding at her breast, flung him into a mortar, and pounded him to a pulp. She flung this into a large earthen pot, adding roots, leaves, and oils, and made the whole into an ointment, with which she rubbed herself before them all, telling them that this would render her invulnerable, and that now she could subdue the universe. Immediately, her subjects, seized with a savage enthusiasm, massacred all their male children, and immense quantities of this human ointment were made; and of which, they say, some is still preserved among the Jagas, and is called *Magija Samba*."

An empire of Amazons was apparently contemplated. Not only were male children to be massacred, but women's flesh was forbidden to be eaten. But she soon found it impossible to battle against nature. Mothers concealed their male infants; and though officers were appointed to be present at every birth to see that the law was carried out, yet, after a time, she found it necessary to order that the invulnerable ointment might be made of the bodies of infants captured in war. Whole territories were conquered and laid waste; and disaffection in her own army she kept down by having the forces continually employed. As age grew upon her she grew worse and worse—more cruel to her lovers; more abominable in all her dealings with her subjects. At last she was subdued. Falling desperately in love with a private soldier in her army, she publicly married him, and gave him half her throne and kingdom. At last she grew tired of him, as she had grown tired of a hundred before. "She yawned sometimes, and it was well known that such yawns swallowed young men's lives." But she had met her match. Calming, cajoling, and flattering his terrible queen, the king-consort managed for a time to postpone his inevitable fate—to be fondled to-day, to be dined off to-morrow! One day he entertained her at dinner with all the choice viands which the kingdom of Congo or the young Portuguese colonies on the Coast could supply. She ate young infants, and drank rum and ratafia, and died. Her drink had been poisoned. Her husband was saved, and the kingdom freed from a tyrant, whose rule was beginning to be too heavy to bear. Yet he was never suspected; or perhaps his act was of too meritorious a character to be taken notice of. So, after much wailing over her funeral—as subjects will wail over kings, no matter how vile—Tembandumba slept with her fathers; and Culemba, her affectionate husband, reigned in her stead.

At the present time the Congo kingdom has fallen from its high estate. The people are lethargic, and altogether given over to palm-wine and tobacco; their houses are huts of boughs, and their clothing a piece of native cloth round the middle.

We must perforce say nothing about the Serawoullis of the Senegambia country, now tolerably civilised, and many of them Mohammedans, or the natives of the Grand Bassam (illustrations on pp. 1, 12, and 13), under French control (as are also the Gambia people to a great extent), for they afford in their ways of life little that is of interest to a reader whose tastes do not lie in listening to the rueful records of experimental African colonisation.

We must just touch—and only touch—on the natives of the Island of Fernando Po, who are known to themselves as the Adíya, but are called by the English Búbis, from their mode of address; Búbi meaning "friend." They are probably the aborigines of the island, though on this point little information can be got from them. It is enough for Búbi philosophy that "they came from their parents." They have a great hatred of civilisation, and live far back in the interior, at a considerable elevation above the sea, the Coast climate being too warm for their tastes. The Búbi forsakes the society of white men for good and sufficient reasons, derived from the experience of repeated plunderings and ill-usage. Civilisation and Christianity, notwithstanding the labours of missionaries, have made little or no influence amongst them. They are as barbarous as ever, and twice as immoral as they were before the first white man set his fevered foot on their shores. Dirty to an extreme, which their black skin cannot conceal, excessively ugly, plastered with a kind of paste, industrious, honest, athletic, and altogether a very favourable specimen of a Negro, the reader who is interested in them and other West African tribes, can find sufficient information for his wants in Dr. Hutchinson's various volumes, to which we beg to refer.*

MANDINGOES.

The last African tribes we will glance at are the Mandingoes, and allied people. They are one of three great tribes which inhabit the country through which flow the Gambia and the Senegal.

Djoloff is the country of the *Wollofs*. It lies between the Senegal and the Gambia, near the coast. With the exception of the Kroomen, they are the finest Negroes in West Africa; though frequently, owing to their addiction to pulmonary disease, flat-chested and spindle-shanked. In the eyes of those who admire a dark glossy skin, rich and soft as Utrecht velvet, the Wolloff girls might be accounted pretty; but when age comes on them they are intensely hideous. The men are courageous, and, under a judicious mixture of kindness and the cat-o'-

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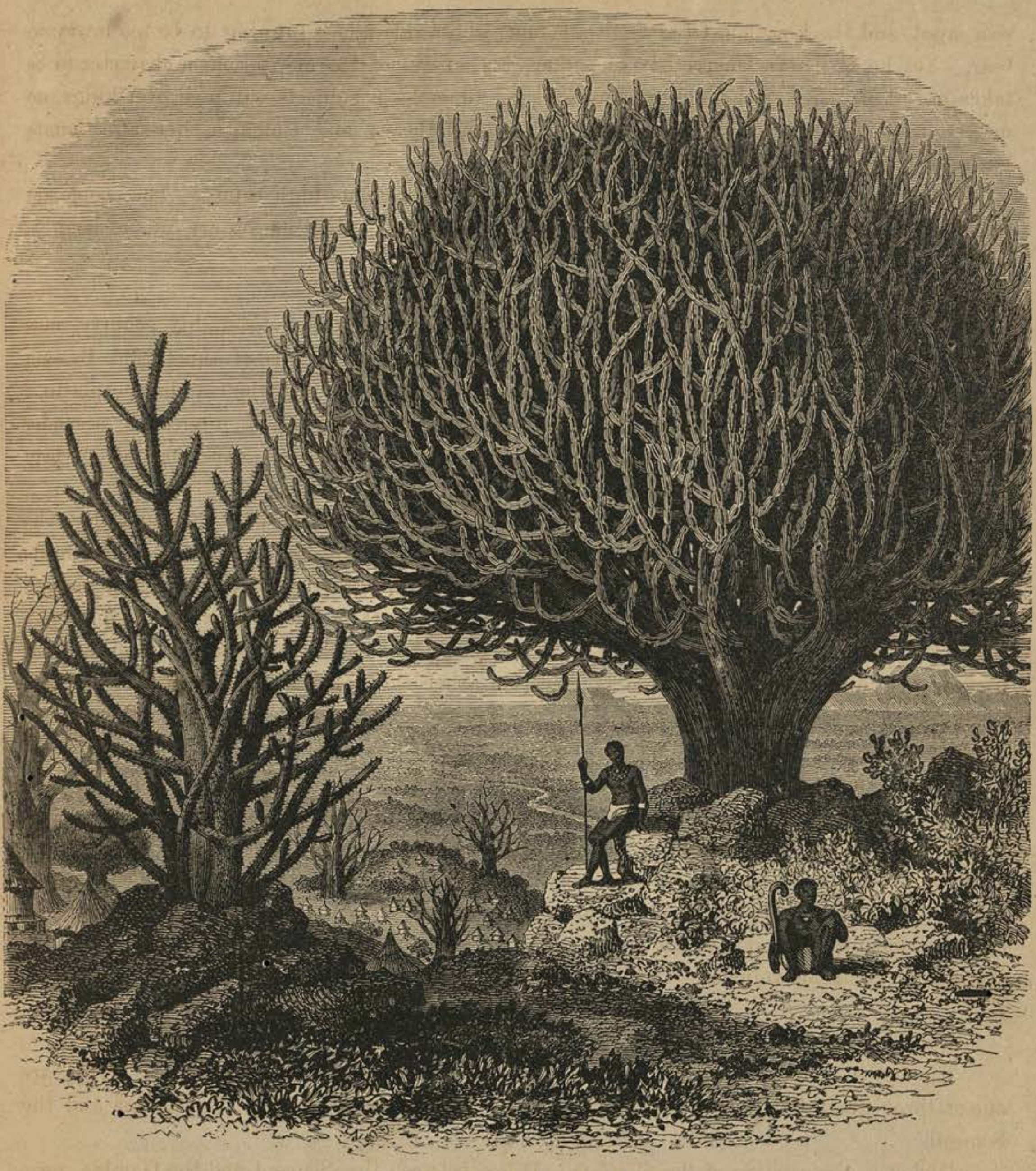
* "Impressions of West Africa" (1858); "Ten Years' Wanderings among the Ethiopians" (1861), &c.



EUPHORBIA TREE OF NORTHERN AFRICA.

nine-tails, make excellent soldiers and good servants. The reverse side of their character shows them to be drunkards, gluttons, lazy in the extreme, and sturdy beggars—who, according to an African proverb, which applies however to the whole race, "if they get the ship will ask for the longboat also." Fond of singing and dancing, like all Negroes, they are adroit thieves and bad Mohammedans, capable of selling their own children into slavery, and of becoming Christians for a bottle of rum.

The *Fouta Fulah*, or *Fellatah*, is a large and warlike nation which has extended its conquests to the Niger, where they are known as the Palo; and Mr. Reade believes them to be identical with the Fans of the Sierra del Crystal, and with the Jagas of the Congo (p. 171). He will even hazard a belief that they are the great *Phont* nation mentioned in Genesis, but which has hitherto escaped the ken of ethnologists. In colour they are reddish; but, like all tribes, they become blacker as they approach the sea. In religion they are Mohammedans, and excellent Arabic scholars. Their occupations are chiefly those of herdsmen, agriculturists, hunters, and warriors.

The *Mandingoes* are a migratory people, intent on commerce, and in pursuit of profit will wander for long distances. They are the commercial travellers of Northern Central Africa; and are so proverbially restive, that it is a common remark that "a Mandingo cannot live long in one place." Mecca and Timbuctoo, Liberia, Ashanti, and Dahomey are among the localities in which the traders of this enterprising race are well known.

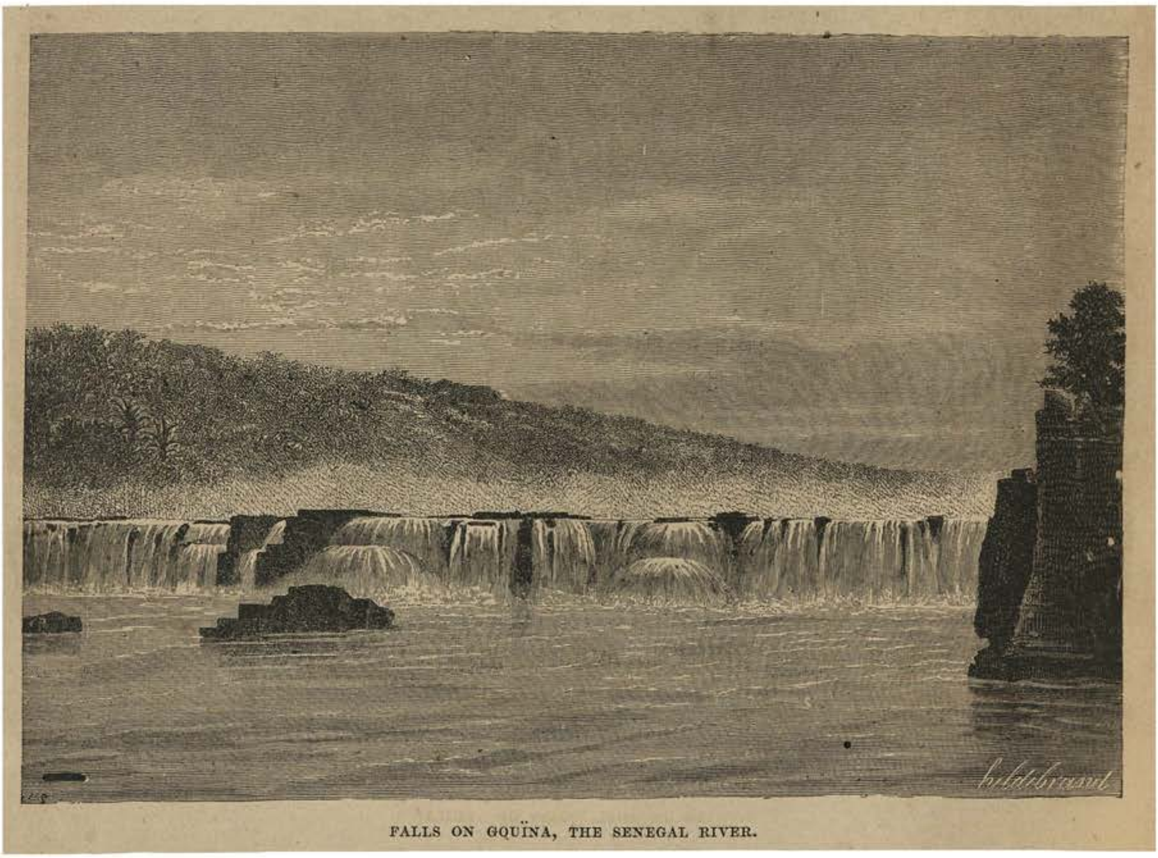
Strict Mohammedans, they will neither sell their own children, nor even their slaves against whom they have no just cause of complaint. They are most courteous. A man, as is the custom over nearly all Africa, is saluted by having his hand shaken; but a native when he meets a woman of his acquaintance raises her hand twice to his nose, smells it keenly, and then passes on—the claims of etiquette having been met. Their government is feudal or patriarchal, each village being governed by an alkadi. Every village has two fields of corn and rice as common property, and which are tilled by people appointed by the alkadi. Their travelling merchants are, however, the really most important men among the Mandingoes. With their wares packed on donkeys, and trading from village to village, opening shops under the trees in the cool of the day, they convey the wares of Europe and the East into the very centre of Africa—into regions as yet unvisited by Europeans, and which it may be long years before any civilised traveller can reach. The Bembuk, Bambarra, and Dzhallunka are sub-tribes of the Mandingoes.

Wolloffs, Foullahs, and Mandingoes, being of one religion, living in one section of country, and naturally subject to very similar or identical influences, have very many habits and characteristics in common. From the accounts given by Mr. Reade, and other travellers, we may glean a few particulars of sufficient interest to warrant us devoting our limited space to them.

All are Mohammedans—in name, at least—their long connection with Moors having effected this change in their life; they are, however, rather corrupt Moslems. Mohammed they do not pay divine honour to. Christ they have some vague traditions about; and believe that one day they will be subdued by the white people—a rather cheap prophecy, considering that virtually they are so already. In most of their villages are rudely-built mosques, in which their holy men, or *Marabouts*, as they are called, officiate (vol. ii., p. 320). The Ramadan, or Mohammedan Lent, is strictly observed by them; no man eating anything between sunrise and sunset, some of the stricter sort even hesitating to swallow their saliva during the forbidden periods of the day, and cover their mouths, lest inadvertently they should swallow a fly. The Ramadan past, the joyous feast of the Tabashet is observed with singing, dancing, and unlimited gorging. A remnant of their old superstition is the respect they pay to the new moon; a respect so widely spread not only over Africa, but in Europe (vol. i., p. 148). When the Senegal people see the new moon for the first time, they salute it by spitting in their hands and waving them round their heads three times. Eclipses, according to their astronomy, are caused by a celestial cat putting her paw between the earth and the moon. The Marabouts, in addition to their sacred functions, are also merchants and physicians, and are distinguished by their red, yellow, or blue caps. Some of them are school teachers, while others are merchants, or, like their European brethren, follow in the train of noblemen and kings. They are not, however, very strict Mohammedans, for one of the chief means by which they enrich themselves is by the sale of gree-grees, or fetishes, generally scraps of Arab writing in leather cases. In our figure (p. 320, vol. ii.) the Marabout is almost covered with these charms, apparently displayed for sale. The rite of circumcision is strictly followed out, with elaborate ceremonies; and during the month in which the rite has been performed, they have the privilege of unlimited license towards the opposite sex, short of murder, or such deadly crime. The women do not hold the same degraded position as in some of the other African races, those of the Foullahs being almost the equal of the men. Many of the females are pretty; and when their hair is decked off with amber beads, and a thin muslin veil thrown over their head and shoulders, they are rather piquant. Thoroughly mercenary and greedy to a disgusting degree, a Senegal girl has but a limited stock of French if she cannot shout, with great volubility, "*Donnez moi quelque chose.*" If a man divorces his wife, all the other women attack him *en masse*, even though he has been pestered with her all his life; and the result of the other women's entreaties and pesterings is, that he generally takes her back, after having disbursed an ox or a slave as a solatium for her wounded feelings. Polygamy, of course, prevails. The wives do not eat with their husbands, though it is thought a high mark of honour to be allowed to prepare the dinner for their lord, each wife being anxious to have this task allotted to her, not so much because she cares for work, but because it spites the other wives; at least, so Mr. Reade says, and probably he is right. The present writer is not a judge of the motives which regulate a polygamous household. Marriages take place on a Friday; and though it is proper to obtain the parents' consent, this preliminary is not absolutely necessary. A beating is not thought sufficient grounds for a divorce; but if the husband breaks tooth or limb, the wife is by law entitled to this outlet for domestic dispeace. Many other causes, common to civilised nations, are also grounds for divorce, if the case can be proved by seven respectable witnesses. The result is that divorces are rather rare than otherwise. No husband can marry again until the divorced wife is married; so that separations by mutual consent, on frivolous grounds, are held in check by this law. Many other curious customs, a mixture of native and Mohammedan rites, are found amongst them. We can only find room for one or two. For instance, when a king dies his death is kept a secret for eight days; he is then privately buried, in case any one obtains his shoulder-blade and makes a fetish of it, which would be powerful enough to dethrone the reigning monarch.

Blacksmiths, sandal-makers, and *griots*, or public minstrels, are all held in great contempt, though in all three occupations there are many skilful practitioners among the Senegambian tribes. In an especial manner is the *griot* despised; and in some cases they are not even given a decent burial, though paid well during life, more through fear than love of them. If they were buried in the ground, it would become barren; if in the water, the fish would die. So to make a compromise, a hollow tree receives their accursed carcases. (A portrait of one of these *griots* is given on p. 309, vol. ii.)

One word on the language of the Mandingoes, and we have done. It is the language most widely spoken in the Senegambian region of the Northern tropics; it is the language of traders and diplomatists. According to Mr. McBriar, it is in its structure thoroughly Eastern; and in some of its grammatical forms resembles Hebrew and Syriac. "Its most peculiar sound is of the Malay family; its method of interrogation is similar to that of the Chinese; and in the composition of some of its verbs it is like the Persian. A few religious terms have been borrowed from the Arabic, and some articles of foreign manufacture are called after their European names."



FALLS ON GOUÏNA, THE SENEGAL RIVER.

We have now concluded all that we can find space to say about the teeming populations of the great, and, to this day, mysterious African continent. It might be expected that, before bidding them farewell, something in the shape of moralising ought to be said in regard to the destiny and condition of the many nations and people we have touched upon at greater or less extent; but I believe the readers will thank the writer, whom they have accompanied on such a long journey, if he would simply supply them with facts, and allow them to supply the moralising for themselves. I will, therefore, bid Africa farewell; before, however, turning to the widely-different plains of far Central Asia, we may devote one chapter to what has been long, and is yet, so interwoven with African life and history—viz., the infamous slave trade.

VIEW IN ADEL, COAST OF AFRICA.

CHAPTER XI.

THE SLAVE TRADE.

How slavery originated is hardly worth inquiry. Laziness, and the convenience of disposing of prisoners in war, may be safely looked upon as the two primary reasons why man first held his fellow-man in bondage. Hebrew, Greek, and Roman had all slaves, either men of their own race or belonging to conquered nationalities. Fair-haired Britons and dark-skinned Carthaginians alike stood for sale in the slave-market of Rome; and were, in the latter days of the empire, treated much worse than were ever Negroes under the most tyrannical master in Cuba or Carolina.

Black slaves were long sold in Africa itself. Slaves formed part of the tribute paid by Abyssinia to Egypt; and from Egypt they passed, along with lions, gold-dust, ivory, and giraffes, into Europe.

West African Slave Trade.

The slave trade had always existed amongst the Moors, who bought, as they buy at the present time, the Negro subjects of the potentates, great or small, with whom they had commercial dealings. But long even before that period, when the Libyan voyagers sailed along the African coast, there were black slaves for purchase, so that the Negro slave trade did not originate with Europeans, as with that peculiarly national love of depreciation inherent in us Anglo-Saxons, we are too often apt to assume, and even—in philanthropic meetings assembled—to boldly assert. There is, however, no doubt that it was with the discovery and colonisation of America that the African slave trade began to attain the dimensions it afterwards assumed. European nations became possessed of vast tracts of tropical and inter-tropical lands, in which no white man could toil, or could be got to toil. The Indians were unfitted for the labour, and rebelled against the task. Accordingly, the system of importing slaves from the African coast began, and England—even in those days, first in every commercial enterprise—there is no denying, was one of the earliest to break ground in this infamous commercial field. No less a man than stout Sir John Hawkins, about the year 1517, was the first Englishman who participated in the traffic of Negroes from the Portuguese settlements in Guinea to the American mines and plantations. So rapidly did the traffic grow, that between the years 1680 and 1700 England imported to her West Indian and American possessions no less than 300,000 Negroes, and between the years 1700 and 1768, 610,000 entered Jamaica alone in our ships. These were the palmy days of the slave trade. It was legal all over the world. Every civilised nation participated in it, though England seems to have had certain touches of remorse, in so far that though she authorised it in her colonies, she prohibited it at home, and declared that any slave touching the soil of Great Britain should be free, though if he afterwards returned to his mother country he could be reclaimed. Negro slaves were, however, common in England. Black footmen and black coachmen were as common and as fashionable in the reign of the Georges in London as they are to-day in New York. To engage in the "Guinea trade" was not accounted dishonourable in society generally. Very respectable gentlemen, in whose company your snuff-box or gold-headed cane would have been perfectly safe, never scrupled to buy a black man—body and soul—in the Bight of Benin, for a jack-knife, three gun flints, or a pint of rum; and sell him to quite as respectable a gentleman in Virginia, Cuba, or the Brazils, for so many pounds of tobacco, 'coon skins, or Spanish dollars. At first there was little division of labour in the trade. The same gentleman who sold the cargo in Cuba captured it on the shores of Guinea. The Spaniards, indeed, were not particular as to the nationality captured, so long as they were not "Christianos." And one of the funniest tales which have come down to us from a rather dull people—in a dull age—is how a vessel was despatched by the Portuguese to seek for the North-West passage to India. All the world was then, or had been, seeking for it amid the icy waters of Baffin's Bay, Hudson's Strait, or Spitzbergen. The ship was absent for a long time. At last—joy!—she was seen sailing up the Tagus. The people crowded the banks, and inquired the captain's cargo. "'Clavos," was the sulky response. "Clavos! Clavos! He has cloves on board. He has been to the Indies.

He has discovered the long sought for passage!" was the cry, and as the ship slowly worked her way up the river, the news spread that the caravel which went away a year ago to seek for the North-West passage to India had come back laden with cloves, pepper, myrrh, and all the spices and riches of the Grand Mogul's empire. The news reaches the court. Here was a discovery as great as that of Christobal Colon, who had discovered America. The King and the Princes troop down to the harbour to welcome the successful discoverer, and the Lord High Chamberlain bears the order of the Tower and Sword to present to the lucky explorer. At last the rueful truth oozes out. It is not "clavos" (cloves) he has on board, but "*es*clavos" (slaves)! Like his predecessors, failing to find the passage among icebergs and ice-fields, he turned to the south, and recouped himself—*more Hispanico*—by kidnapping a few unfortunate natives whom he inveigled on board. And the reader may be well assured that *clavos* versus *esclavos* was a standard joke for many a day among the seafaring men who sailed out of Lisbon town. But after the "Guinea trade" had got thoroughly established as a branch of legitimate commerce, a captain of a slaver would as soon have thought of stealing a Negro as a bar of ebony or an elephant's tusk. The Negro chiefs stole them, the agent bought them, the captain conveyed them to America, and the supercargo sold them. They were all honourable gentlemen, from the agent onwards. There might, perhaps, be a doubt about the honesty of the Negro chief who stole the cargo. But that was no business of theirs. The muskets they gave him were good muskets, as far as five shillings wholesale would insure goodness. The beads, scarlet pocket-handkerchiefs, and looking-glasses were fair of their kind, and there was no keener casuist than your Negro slaver of A.D. 1770. It was a lucrative business. Bags of pieces of eight, and piles of doubloons poured in upon the lucky traders. Scripture was not wanting in its support, and though certain weak men might shake their heads over the whole transaction, the Guinea trade was prosperous; the barracoons on the West Coast of Africa were crammed; tribe was at war with tribe to capture slaves; and every ebony potentate, from Cabo Verde to Benguela, disported himself in velvet and cloth of gold, and lived in a perpetual paradise, where Spanish wines and West India rum flowed in a never-ending stream. It was a system of barbarity from beginning to end. The abomination commenced in the peaceful African village invaded for the purpose of capturing slaves. Where it ended no man knew. For that no man cared after he had landed his cargo on the American shores. Slave-hunting expeditions were organised by the native kings. Bruce, when travelling in Abyssinia, in 1770, describes one of these expeditions which he witnessed. "The grown-up men are all killed, and are then mutilated, parts of their bodies being carried away as trophies; several of the old mothers are also killed, while others, frantic with fear and despair, kill themselves. The boys and girls of a more tender age are then carried off in brutal triumph." Another writer says, "The King of Bambara [see page 4 for figure of natives of this country] having declared war against Kaarta, and divided his army into small detachments, overran the country, and seized on the inhabitants before they had time to escape; and in a few days the whole kingdom of Kaarta became a scene of desolation. The attack was soon retaliated. Daisy, the King of Kaarta, took with him 800 of his best men, and surprised in the night three large villages, near Kooniakary, in which many of his traitorous subjects had taken up their residence; all others, and indeed all able men who fell into Daisy's hands, were immediately put to death."* The rest were sold into slavery.

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* Wilberforce's "Letter on the Abolition of the Slave Trade" (1807), p. 392.

Villages were fired in the night, and the wretched inhabitants, as they rushed naked from the flames, were seized and carried off to the Coast for disposal to the slave traders. The whole country was in a state of alarm. No one was secure. "Every man who has acquired any considerable property, or who has a large family, the sale of which will produce a considerable profit, excites in the mind of the chieftain, near whom he resides, the same longings which are called forth in the wild beast by the exhibition of his proper prey; and he himself lives in a continual state of suspense and terror." These are not the statements of a mere partisan, but are confirmed by impartial eye-witnesses, and even by men like Bryan Edwards, who were vigorous advocates for the continuance of slavery. The number captured bore but a small proportion to the number of people killed in the act of seizing them, or who perished on the march to the Coast. Here is a choice speech of the King of Ashanti to M. Dupuis, who visited him in 1823. He is talking of his wars—boasting, as usual. "Then my fetish made me stony, like my ancestors, and I killed Denkera and took his gold, and brought more than 20,000 slaves to Coomassie. Some of these people being bad men, I washed my stool in their blood for the fetish. But then, some were good people, and these I sold or gave to my captains. Many, moreover, died, because this country does not grow much corn, like Sarem, and what can I do? Unless I kill or sell them, they will grow strong and kill my people. Now you must tell your master (the King of England) that these slaves can work for him, and if he wants 10,000 he can have them."

From Sierra Leone to Cape Mount scarcely a spot along the West African Coast but showed traces of this horrible trade. No sooner did a ship arrive in any of the rivers on the windward coast, than it seemed to act as a signal for war between the native tribes, the hamlets of the weaker party being burnt, and the wretched survivors carried off and sold to the slavers. It was calculated that for every slave captured double that number of people were sacrificed to obtain him or her. The adults, as being too troublesome, and not bringing so good a price in the market, were, with the young children, generally killed, or allowed to perish in the flames of their villages, while the young people were brought to the barracoons, until a ship was ready to receive them. Travellers, who in those days ascended the Niger, were woke up at night by the yells of victims being seized for the slave market, and by the blaze of villages along the banks. But examples need not be multiplied; they can be found in abundance in any work of African travel of that date.

The victims captured, the march to the Coast commenced. Mungo Park describes them travelling in many gangs or caravans to the sea, tied together by their necks with thongs of bullocks' hide, twisted like a rope, seven slaves upon a thong, and a man with a musket between every seven.*

If any one showed marks of discontent, he was secured in a different manner. "A thick billet of wood is cut about three feet long, and a smooth notch being made upon one side of it, the ankle of the slave is bolted to the smooth part by means of a strong iron staple, one prong of which passes on each side of it. In the present case they were put on by the blacksmith as soon as the slaves arrived from Kancaba, and were not taken off until the morning when the coffle departed from Gambia."

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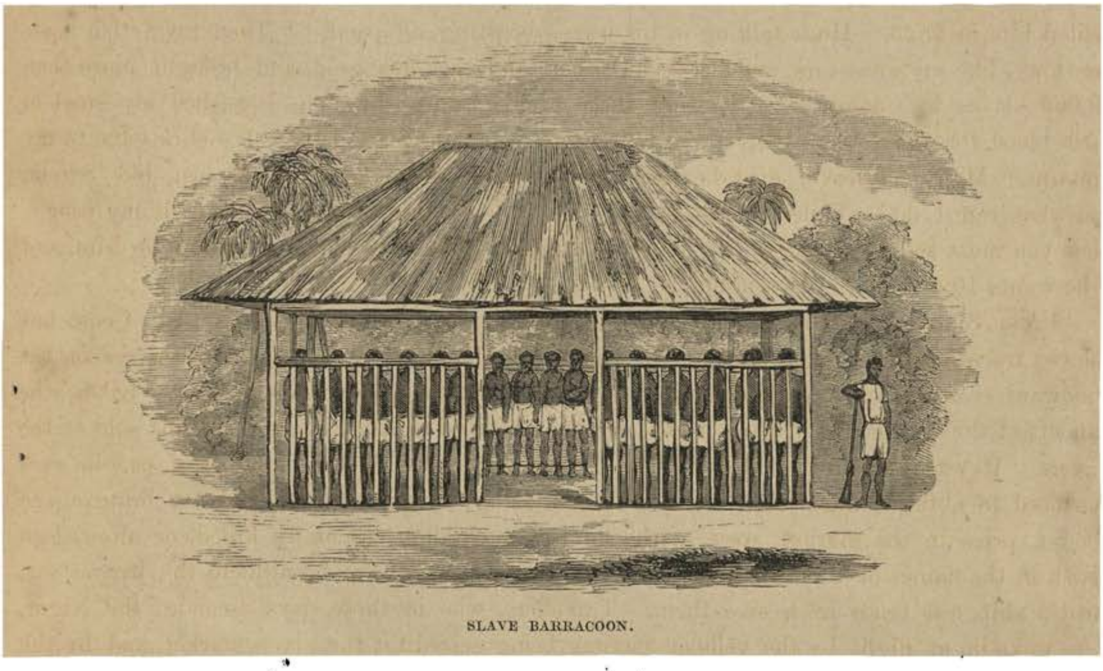
* "Travels." vol. i., pp. 290, 438.

Often receiving no food from morning to night, they would be compelled to eat clay to satisfy the gnawings of appetite. If they fell sick, they were lashed to stimulate them to keep up with the caravan. If they dropped down in the last agonies of sickness, they were unshackled from their more robust companions, and allowed to perish in the desert. Even the very slaves themselves got so brutalised that, either out of hard-heartedness, or to simulate an interest in their owner's affairs, they would cry out on such an occasion, "Kangtegi!" (cut her throat!). All this happened in the "coffle" of Kaarfa, a "slatee," or slave merchant, whom Park describes as "a worthy Negro, with a mind above his condition—a good creature." Now, as most of the slavers were anything but good creatures, with minds not above their condition, we can understand that the mortality in marching to the Coast must have been something terrible. In 1807, Sidi Hamit, a Moor, set out from Wednoon with a caravan of 1,000 men and 4,000 camels, but only twelve camels and twenty-two men reached Timbuctoo alive. Slaves, long after they were settled on a West Indian plantation, would talk with horror of the terrible march to the Coast. Out of 40,000 people whom Mehemet Ali, in 1820-21, tore from their country, in one of his military expeditions, not over one-third ever reached Egypt.



SLAVE BARRACOON.

Once arrived on the coast, the slaves were detained in barracks, or barracoons, as they were called, until a ship was ready to receive them. Pent up like cattle, with scarcely enough food to sustain life, wallowing in filth, disease and starvation again decimated the wretched creatures. An English officer, writing in 1820, describes a party whom he saw as "mere skeletons, labouring under every misery that want and fatigue could produce. In some, the fetters had, by constant action, worn through the lacerated flesh to the bare bone, the ulcerated portions having become the resort of myriads of flies, which had deposited their eggs in the gangrenous cavities."*

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* Owen, "Voyage," Vol. ii., p. 234.

The slavers having made their selection, the rejected were marched back to the barracoons, often begging piteously to be allowed to go, knowing that slavery could not be worse than detention in these wretched places. Then commenced the horrors of transit to the plantations, or, as it was called, the "middle passage." Though elaborate regulations were made as to the number of slaves to be carried to the tonnage of the vessel, these rules were systematically treated as null and void. There was no regular system of inspection; and the slave trade being a legal one, the war-ships rarely took the trouble to board them to see that the Government regulations were carried out. Accordingly, it was scarcely consistent with human nature, as developed in the African slave trade, that a captain should neglect his own and his owner's interest in favour of the Government regulations, when Negroes were plentiful and cheap in "The Bights." The rule therefore was, that as many as possible were packed in the smallest possible space; some of the less humane of the captains calculating that if even a certain percentage died, there was still a profit in favour of the neglect of the Government regulations as to stowage. Mr. Falconbridge, who was an eye-witness of the horrors of the palmy days of the slave trade, gives us a description so graphic that I may be allowed to quote it, more especially as it is fully confirmed from many other sources. "The men Negroes," writes this gentleman, "on being brought on board, are immediately fastened together, two and two, by handcuffs on their wrists, and by iron riveted on their legs. They are frequently stowed so close as to admit of no other posture than lying on their sides. Neither will the height between the decks, unless directly under the grating, permit them the indulgence of an erect posture, especially where there are platforms [slave-decks], which is generally the case. These platforms are a kind of shelf, about eight or nine feet in breadth, extending from the side of the ship towards the centre. They are placed nearly midway between the decks, at the distance of two or three feet from each deck. Upon these the Negroes are stowed in the same manner as they are on the deck underneath. . . . It often happens that those who are placed at a distance from the buckets, in endeavouring to get to them, tumble over their companions, in consequence of their being shackled. These accidents, though unavoidable, are productive of continual quarrels, in which some of them are always bruised. In this distressed situation they desist from the attempt; and this becomes a fresh source of broils and disturbances, and tends to render the situation of the poor captive wretches still more uncomfortable. In favourable weather they are fed upon deck, but in bad weather their food is given them below. Numberless quarrels take place among them during their meals, more especially when they are put upon short allowance, which frequently happens. In that case the weak are obliged to be content with a very scanty allowance. Their allowance of water is about half a pint each at every meal. Upon the Negroes refusing to take sustenance, I have seen coals of fire, glowing hot, put on a shovel, and placed so near their lips as to scorch and burn them, and this has been accompanied with threats of forcing them to swallow the coals if they any longer refuse to eat. I have also been credibly informed that a certain captain in the slave trade poured melted lead on such of the Negroes as obstinately refused their food." To keep them in humour, they were compelled to sing and dance; and if the poor savages, miserable, and depressed with hunger, bruises, and home and sea-sickness, refused, the cat-o'-nine-tails was freely employed. Unbounded licence was given to the officers and crew, who were generally the offscourings of ports, and scenes of the most unheard-of licentiousness and brutality were common on board every slave ship. Coming from far inland villages, and more easily affected by sea-sickness than Europeans, this *maladie de la mer* frequently terminated in death.

Fevers, fluxes, and other diseases, generated by the hot, suffocating, and fetid air of the slave-decks, carried off a large percentage. Blood and mucus frequently covered the decks, so that they resembled the floor of a slaughter-house more than anything else. For one-third of the slaves to die during the passage was not accounted anything out of the way. A Liverpool ship took on board 700 slaves in the Bonny River, and when she arrived in the West Indies nearly one-half of them were dead, Falconbridge, in his evidence before the committee appointed in 1790 to inquire into the state of the slave trade, states, that "in stowing the slaves, they wedged them in so that they had not as much room as a man in his coffin; that when going from one side of their rooms to the other, he always took off his shoes, but could not avoid pinching them; and that he had marks on his feet where they bit and scratched him. Their confinement in this situation was so injurious, that he had known them to go down apparently in good health at night, and be found dead in the morning." Much more to the same effect could be stated, but it only confirms Mr. Falconbridge's description. It may be added that this eye-witness was a surgeon on board slave ships. A case is on record where a slave ship's captain, to economise the water, which had run short, threw 132 of 400 slaves overboard on the passage to Jamaica; and in the evidence which was given in the lawsuit which followed, on the owner claiming from the underwriters the value of the Negroes thrown overboard, it came out that this was not uncommon — an idea prevailing among the captains that they could claim insurance if any portion of the "cargo" was thrown overboard on pretext of the safety of the vessel, while if the slaves died a natural death the loss would fall upon the owners. All this happened on board English ships, where the slaves were, as a rule, much more humanely treated than on board the vessels of other nations, more especially those under the Spanish and Portuguese flags. A Spanish schooner, the *Vicua* was captured in 1822, after the crew had deserted her. On the English officers boarding, it was found that a match had been suspended over the powder magazine, in such a manner that in a few minutes more 325 unfortunate human beings who were on board would have been blown to pieces. On board this vessel, thumb-screws and other instruments of torture were found. Many of the slaves, from the madness and misery consequent on confinement and suffering, had injured themselves by beating against the bare "slave-decks" on which they lay, and had vented their grief upon such as were next to them, by biting and tearing their flesh.*

These facts may be given simply as examples. It would be impossible to exhaust the subject in the limited space we can devote to it. What we have given may show the atrocities which in the end of the last and the beginning of this century were connected with the West African slave trade.

But the horrors were too great for men not actually profiting by the trade to tolerate; and in 1787 an agitation—in which Granville Stuart, W. Dillwyn, and the philanthropic Thomas Clarkson, were moving spirits—was set on foot with a view to the abolition, or at least modification, of the slave trade. It was not, however, until 1806 that British subjects were prohibited from taking part in the infamous traffic. Our countrymen, however, still carried it on under Spanish and Portuguese colours; until, in 1811, it was declared to be felony, and in 1824, ordered to be treated as piracy, and punishable with death, though in 1837 the law was so far modified as to make the offenders liable only to transportation for life. The example of Great Britain in abolishing the slave trade was soon followed by the United States, Denmark, Holland, France, and the American republics of Venezuela, Chili, and Buenos Ayres; in 1815 and 1817 by Spain and Portugal; and in 1826 Brazil declared it piratical for any of her subjects to be engaged in the trade subsequent to the year 1830. These treaties were further supplemented by the mutual right of search being conceded to each other by the great powers; and in 1845, England and France agreed with the other powers to maintain a squadron with a view to prevent the slave trade on the African coast.

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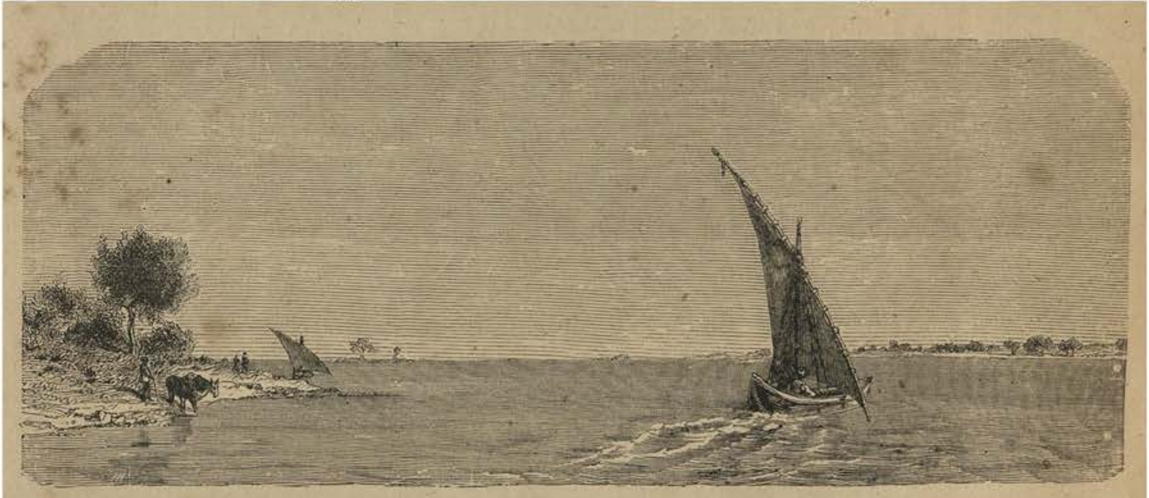
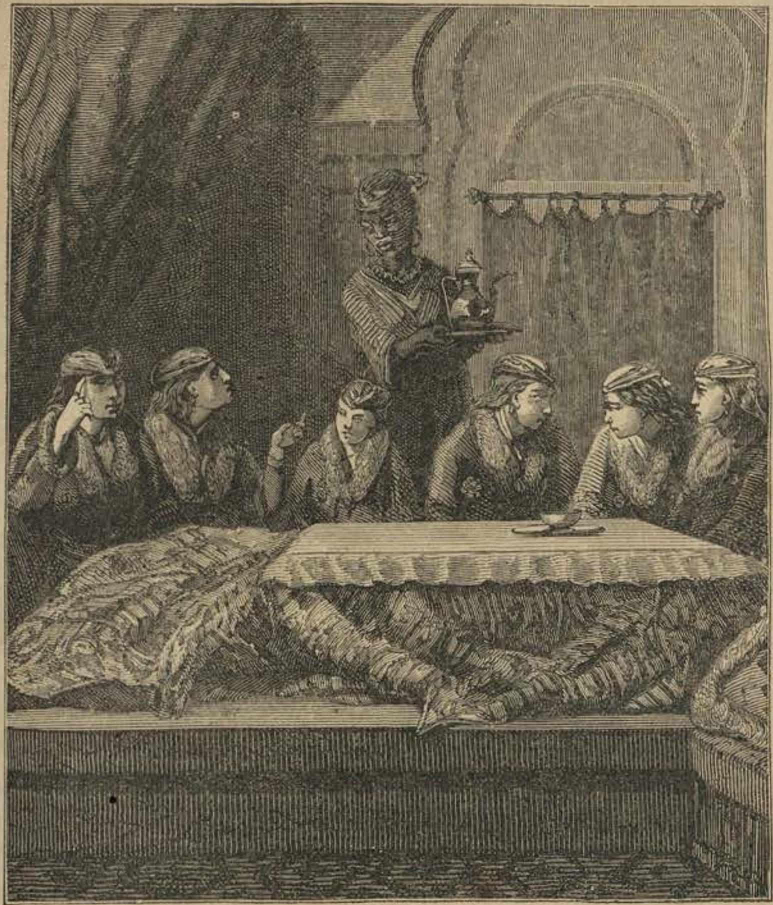
* "Report of the African Institution" (1823), p. 29.

Still the interest in suppressing the slave trade from Africa was only lukewarm in some of the nations who were signatories to the treaties; and there is no doubt but that both Spain and Portugal, and perhaps also Brazil, winked at the traffic being carried on under their flags. It was the interest of Spain to have slaves in her West Indian possessions; Brazil required them at home, while Portugal, as well as Spain, did and do to this day, maintain slavery in their colonies. Slaves being required, and being higher in value than ever, daring, reckless men were not wanting who would run all risk to share in the gain to be made by the illegal traffic. Saucy brigs still lay in the fever-infested mouths of the West African rivers, waiting their chance to elude the cruisers, and when a favourable opportunity occurred all sail was hoisted, and then—hey! for Cuba or Carolina! For there is no doubt but that cargoes of slaves were every now and then "run"—up to the date of the Civil War—on the southern shores of the United States. A capture was occasionally made, and if the captain was not a "smart" man the law was now and then vindicated in his person. But in reality there was rarely any punishment meted out to either commander or crew. Let the cruisers board them, and suddenly the captain was only a passenger, and the crew belonged to every nation under the sun, except that under the flag of which the capture was made. The result was that the Negroes were landed in the Seychelles, at Sierra Leone, or in Liberia, and the captain



BANKS OF THE WHITE NILE.

and crew at the nearest port; the value of the ship being divided amongst the sickly crew of the war-ship which had made the capture. I can only remember at present one case in which capital punishment was meted out to the captain of a slaver. One of the pleasantest men I ever knew, I met round a blubber fire in the vicinity of a beleaguered ship in Baffin's Bay. I was then a wandering naturalist, and travel makes us acquainted with strange friends. It was with a shock that years afterwards I recognised in the portraits of the captain of a slaver hung in New York the man who long before had been so kind to the lad adrift on the dreary ice-field of the frozen North. Anti-slavery feeling was at that time running high, and he fell a victim to satisfy the outcry which public opinion in the Northern States had raised against his crime. As a rule, however, all the good which the "preventive squadron," and the penal laws against slavery did, was to confine the trade to fewer men, and having rendered it more risky, compelled them to cram a larger cargo into a smaller space, and to pursue it with greater barbarity than ever. I have heard it frequently affirmed that it is all nonsense that slaves were ever thrown overboard to avoid capture when the vessel was pursued by cruisers; for the mere fact of slave-decks, an extra supply of water casks, or any evident preparations for slaves being



THE NEGRO SLAVE IN THE HAREM.

made, was quite enough to render the vessel liable to seizure, without a single Negro being on board. No doubt this was perfectly true, though, curiously enough, one writer who makes it acknowledges that the vessel in which he made a passage to the Cape De Verde Islands was occasionally employed as a slaver, and had every sign of such, but that when boarded by a British gunboat, the officer in command, though morally certain of the character of the vessel he was overhauling, did not venture to seize her. Without more absolute certainty than a slave-deck, few captains of war-ships would like to run the risk of seizing a vessel. At all events there is no use denying that slaves were thrown overboard during the chase. I will only give one case. "In February, 1836," writes Sir Thomas Fowell Buxton, "I was informed by Commander Paget that the Spanish slaver, *Argus*, three months before that date, was chased by the *Charybdis*, Lieutenant Mercer; and that during the chase, ninety-seven slaves had been thrown overboard, and that a Spanish captain he had captured declared that he would never hesitate to throw the slaves overboard to prevent being taken."

The truth is—painful as it may be to British naval pride and philanthropy generally—that the West African slave trade died a natural death. It expired of exhaustion by the demand for the slaves being cut off at the fountain head. No doubt the introduction of steam into the navy, and the formation of a *cordon* of war-ships along the West Coast, made the pursuit of the slave trade more difficult, but this alone did not stop it. On the 1st of August, 1834, slavery was abolished in our Colonies; on the 1st of January, 1863, in the United States; and in Brazil, about the same time, a law was passed by which the slaves in that Empire will be gradually free. Slavery has not existed in the Dutch Colonies since 1863; the revolt from the Spanish yoke in South and North America has for ever abolished it in what are now the Hispano-American Republics. The Revolution in Hayti in 1791 put an end to it in that island; in Cuba and Porto Rico it is now practically non-existent; and, in a word, it is only in the extra-American Spanish Colonies, and in those of Portugal, that slavery is found under the rule of any of the great civilised governments. The slave trade, therefore, will not "pay," and it has died out. If slaves were wanted again, they could be got—cruisers, Acts of Parliament, Chambers, Congresses, and every other legislative body under the sun, notwithstanding. The result is that, with the exception of an odd slave or two now and then smuggled on board a Portuguese or native trading vessel to some of the neighbouring colonies, or Moorish possessions, there is no slave trade on the West African Coast. It, however, still exists, as we have seen, among the native tribes. But as the British Government has now taken steps to abolish it in the tribes under its protection or rule, in a few years the slave trade, once so flourishing and lucrative, will be a thing of the past on the West Coast of Africa, and in all its more objectionable features, notwithstanding the evident sympathy that many traders on the Coast still have for the traffic in "black ivory," it will be non-existent. To Africa, the slave trade was an unmitigated misery—an evil unredeemed by one good point. It caused war, bloodshed, and every kind of wretchedness, and it impeded, or rather destroyed, all honest trade. Wherever the slave trade had been stopped it has been found that immediately a greater export of ivory, gold dust, ebony, palm-oil, and other products of legitimate African commerce followed, and that the natives became more industrious and less brutal than before. On the other hand, it is questionable whether America could have been settled, or many parts of it cultivated, at this day, without Negro aid. To the "Guinea trade" we owe the earliest impetus to African discovery and commerce, and it must never be forgotten that to it we are indebted for the writings of such doughty men, and such gallant seamen and historians, as Drake, Dampier, Bosman, Jannequin, Barbot and others. It may, however, be a question whether we have not purchased the copyright of their works at too dear a rate.

THE WHITE NILE SLAVE TRADE.

Hitherto we have been speaking of a slave trade mainly of the past, the outlet for which was the West Coast of Africa. There is, however, at the present time—or at least was a very few months ago—another and equally infamous traffic, the route from which to the slave-market is by the upper waters of the Nile. The emporium of the traffic is Khartoum, which in another volume we sketched in the very dark colours necessary for its correct portraiture (vol. ii., p. 204). The White Nile is the feeder of Khartoum, and the slave trade of the Soudan, and all the country round the upper waters of the river, finds a highway down the Nile. In other words, kidnapping and murder are the trade of the bulk of the inhabitants of this region. They have themselves in many cases been plundered and ruined by the slave traders, and having lost all, do not hesitate to plunder and kidnap others. The ivory trade of the White Nile is only worth about £40,000 per annum. The real source of wealth is found in slaves. Syrians, Copts, Turks, Circassians, and a few Europeans are engaged in it. The method in which the ivory trader—or the slave trader, for the terms are almost synonymous—goes to work is as follows:—Borrowing money at 100 per cent., he agrees to repay the lender in ivory at half its market value. He now hires vessels, and from 100 to 300 men, mostly Arabs and runaway villains from all the neighbouring countries, who have found a congenial home in Khartoum. The largest of these traders had 2,500 men in his pay; and Sir Samuel Baker calculates that about 15,000 men—chiefly Arab and Egyptian subjects—are so employed. Each slave-trading potentate has a district to himself. One of them, Agah, lorded over nearly 90,000 square miles of territory. "He purchases," writes Sir Samuel Baker, "guns and large quantities of ammunition for his men, together with a few hundred pounds of glass beads. The piratical expedition being complete, he pays his men five months wages in advance, at the rate of forty-five piasters (nine shillings) per month, and he agrees to pay them eighty per month for any period exceeding the five months advanced. His men receive their advance partly in cash, partly in cotton stuffs for clothes, at an exhorbitant price. Every man has a sheet of paper, upon which is written by the clerk of the expedition the amount he has received, both in goods and money, and this paper he must produce at the final settlement. The vessels sail about December, and on arrival at the desired locality the party disembark, and proceed into the interior, until they arrive at the village of some Negro chief, with whom they establish an intimacy. Charmed with his new friends, the power of whose weapons he acknowledges, the Negro chief does not neglect the opportunity of seeking their alliance to attack a hostile neighbour. Marching through the night, guided by their Negro host, they bivouac within an hour's march of the unsuspecting village, doomed to an attack about half an hour before break of day. The time arrives; and quietly surrounding the village, while its occupants are still sleeping, they fire the grass huts in all directions, and pour volleys of musketry through the flaming thatch. Panic-stricken, the unfortunate victims rush from their burning dwellings, and the men are shot down like pheasants in a battue, while the women and children, bewildered in the danger and confusion, are kidnapped and secured. The herds of cattle, still within their kraal, or "zarceba," are easily disposed of, and are driven off with great rejoicing, as the prize of victory. The women and children are fastened together, the former secured in an adjustment called a shéba, made of a forked pole, the neck of the prisoner fitted into the fork, secured by a cross-piece lashed behind, while the wrists, brought together in advance of the body, are tied to the pole. The children are then fastened by their necks with a rope attached to the women, and thus forming a living chain, in which order they are marched to the head-quarters in company with the captured herds. This is the commencement of business. Should there be ivory in any of the huts not destroyed by the fire, it is appropriated. A general plunder takes place. The traders' party dig up the floors of the huts to search for iron hoes, which are generally thus concealed, as the greatest treasure of the Negroes; the granaries are overturned, and wantonly destroyed; and the hands are cut off the slain, the more easily to detach the copper or iron bracelets that are usually worn. With this booty the *traders* return to their Negro ally. They have thrashed and discomforted his enemy, which delights him; they present him with thirty or forty head of cattle, which intoxicates him with joy; and a present of a pretty little captive girl of about fourteen completes his happiness."

The stolen cows are now exchanged for ivory. The slaves, and two-thirds of the captured cattle, belong to the trader, and his men receive as their perquisites one-third of the animals. The slaves are then put up at auction, the men purchasing what number they can or choose, the amount being entered against them. But in case the document should fall into the hands of the Government or a Foreign Consul, instead of entering the sum due as for slaves, fictitious supplies are put in their place, as being credited to them. The relatives may repurchase their friends for ivory if they choose, but if not they are kept, and are continually being sold and resold amongst the men according to their fancies. Any attempt to escape is punished either by a severe flogging—unless, indeed, the captive is shot or hung—"*pour encourager les autres.*"

The Negro ally does not, however, always get clear off. Generally he quarrels, or is made to quarrel with his Egyptian ally, and then meets the fate of those whom he assisted the traders against. The beasts are, after the season is over, packed with the human cargo, and the voyage is commenced down the White Nile by one part of the traders' men, while the others remain in the country, plundering, murdering, and kidnapping, to have another cargo ready by the time the boats return from their downward voyage. The slaves are, of course, not brought into Khartoum: in that town there are too many Foreign Consuls, who might make their disembarkation very inconvenient to the owners. They are landed at various ports within a few days' journey of the capital of Soudan, at which places purchasers are ready waiting, cash in hand, to purchase them. These purchasers are chiefly Arabs, who in their turn march them across country to Sennaar, when they are sold to the Arabs and Turks. Others are taken for long distances to ports on the Red Sea, thence to be transhipped to Arabia and Persia. Many reach the slave market in Cairo, or are disseminated through slave-dealing Egypt.*.

The Government doubtless connived at this traffic. Indeed, it is affirmed that the officers were paid partly in slaves, and there is no doubt that, from the highest to the lowest official, all the Egyptian residents in the Soudan favoured the slave dealers, and if they did not share in their profits would gladly have done so.

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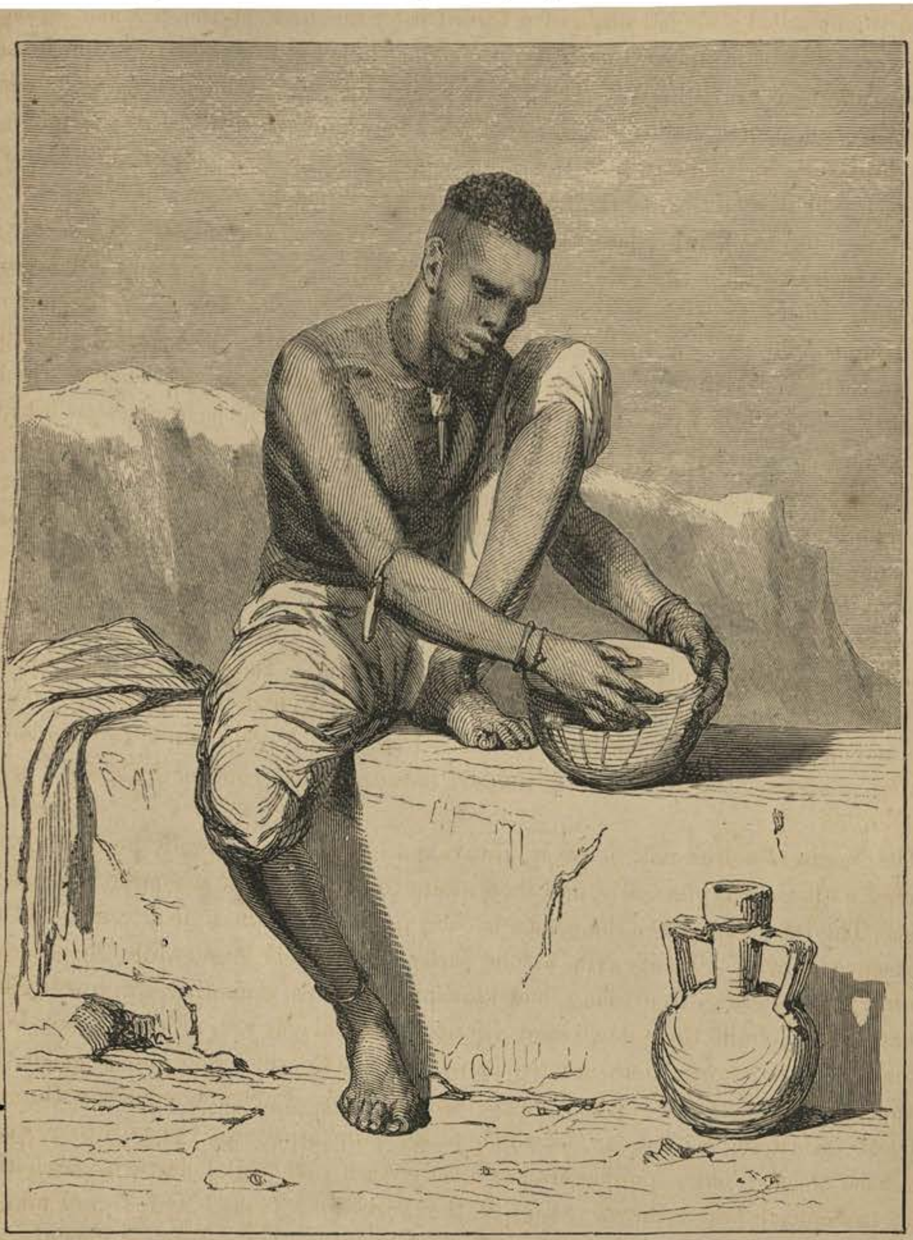
* Baker, "Albert N'Yanza" (new edition), p. 15. See also "Ismalia" (1874).

We have already mentioned that, instigated by representations made to him, the present



NATIVE OF THE DINKA TRIBE, WHITE NILE.

Khedive, Ismael Pasha, despatched a military expedition, under Sir Samuel Baker, with a view to conquer and annex the country lying in the vicinity of the upper waters of the White Nile, with a view to the entire suppression of the slave trade of that region. In this he has been partially successful, and under his successor in the Government of the Soudan (Colonel Gordon) this object may be to a great extent accomplished; though in such a wide country, and with such a set of men to deal with, it is too much to hope that the suppression of the White Nile slave trade can ever be wholly accomplished.[*]

The East African Slave Trade.

What we have said of the West African and Nile slave trades applies almost equally to that which finds an outlet on the East Coast of Africa. It is chiefly in the hands of Arabs, who take their cargoes either to the Portuguese settlements near the Zambesi, or to other points on the Coast, there to await transportation to Zanzibar, or to smuggle them northward to find their way into Egypt, Arabia, and Turkey. There is not, and perhaps never was, an export trade across the sea from the East Coast. It is and was only a local and landward trade; but it is nevertheless abominable enough as it is. Lieutenant Cameron, R.N., in a letter to the Foreign Minister, the Earl of Derby, dated March 4th, 1874, thus describes the traffic:—

"The slave trade flourishes in a belt of jungle villages about a week's march from the Coast, the people of which have agreed to supply a certain number of slaves to the inhabitants of Whincle, in return for which they are allowed to extort hongo, or black mail, from passing caravans. This has only been the case during the last twelve months or so; our caravan, and some others which came up about the same time, having been the first which were subjected to this extortion. These villages are built in the centre of patches of jungle, and only accessible by narrow and tortuous paths which could easily be blocked so as to render access impossible. However, none of the patches are large enough to prevent their being thoroughly searched by rockets, and in the event of the people refusing to desist from their abominable traffic, they might easily be reached by a naval brigade formed from the squadron on the East Coast. With a view to this, it might be well if the depôt ship were furnished with a rocket battery, and a couple of the Abyssinian seven-pounders, together with a mule train sufficient to provide the necessary transport. Proceeding westward on the regular caravan route, Timbaweni and some dependent villages form another centre where slaves are sold to caravans proceeding to the Coast. They are principally procured by forays on the surrounding Washenzi (or wild people), a party setting out and destroying villages, and carrying off those of the inhabitants who are not killed, or are unable to make their escape. If among the captives there are any who by age or infirmities are valueless in the market, they are frequently murdered in cold blood in order to save the value of their food. After crossing the Makata Plain, the villages of Mbumi, Kdeletamare, Rehennedo, and Muinyi Asagara, together with some owned by freedmen or escaped slaves of the Arabs at Zanzibar, form the foci of the trade here. In addition to the slaves obtained by forays, the captives made in the internal wars of the Waroro and Waheni are bought and sold, and also the people are by no means averse to attacking caravans of Wanyamwesi, if they think themselves strong enough to do so in safety; but this is usually done more for the sake of plunder than to obtain slaves. From here one passes on past Mpwapwa, which is more a provision depôt for caravans between the two desert tracks than anything else, to Urogo, which is principally an importing country, the soil being comparatively poor, and requiring more labour in its culture than the rest of the country; besides which the natives (men) usually confine themselves to taking care of their cattle, of which they have large herds, leaving the field work to their women and slaves. However, at Khoko, where a few Wamrima are settled, and Mdaburii, the two western districts, slaves are exported, usually brought from the Warori, whose country marches through on the south. After Ugogo we came to Unyamnesa, which may be considered as comprising Mgunda Mkali on the east, and Uvinga on the west. Here the question is more complicated than anywhere else.

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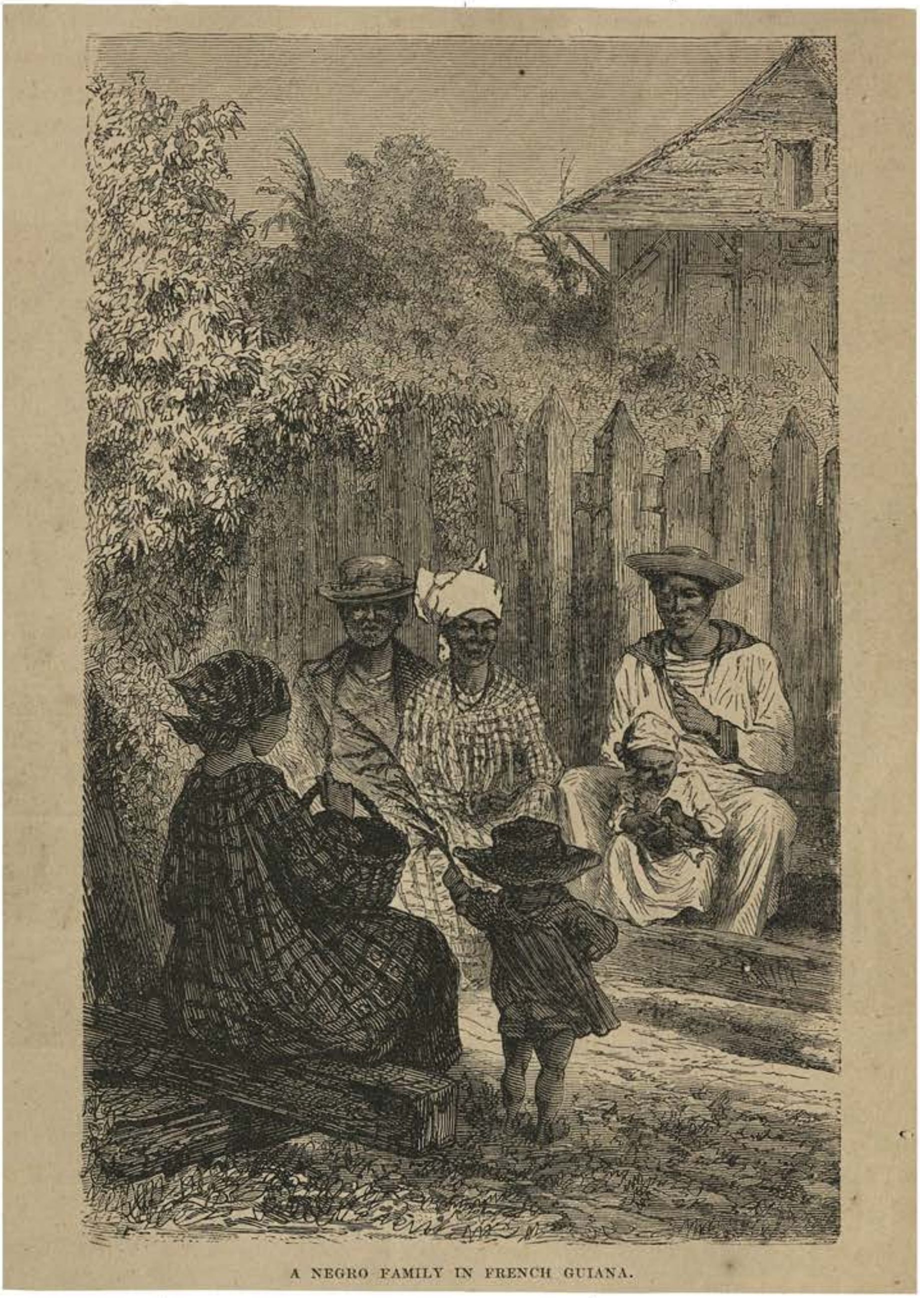
[*] At page 207, vol. ii., I have stated, on the authority of the newspapers of the day, that the Khedive has declared the slave trade of the White Nile to be a Government monopoly. It now appears that it is the *ivory* trade which has been so monopolised. It is, however, really very immaterial which is concentrated into the Government hands, as both are so intermixed as to be almost synonymous. "The slave trade of the White Nile," to use the words of Baker, and he is speaking of the experiences of his last great expedition, "will be impossible so long as the Government is determined that it shall be impossible." Even if it be suppressed on the White Nile, it can still be carried on by means of Darfur and Kordofan. These regions the Egyptian Government is endeavouring to conquer; the former is indeed now annexed.

1st. There are the Arabs, under which term I include Waswahili, Wamrima, and the rest, as it is the general custom to do so in this part of Africa, and their connection with the trade may be classed under two heads. (*a*) The respectable portion, who have either settled in the country, or who take charge of large leading caravans. These men buy slaves for domestic purposes, and to cultivate their large shimbas or farms, many possessing a whole village and surrounding country, besides their tembe in the Aborah Kivikurah, or Kiviharah, some more than one. All the inhabitants of these villages are slaves. Besides this, when there is lack of the necessary porterage, they use slaves to form their caravans, who used to form a large proportion of the men sold at Zanzibar. (*b*) The Arabs who are not rich enough to do as above, frequently adopt the following plan:—They manage somehow or another to arm a party of men, and travel about the country fomenting the quarrels between neighbouring villages, and, taking as a rule the side of the strongest, are repaid, after the other side have been conquered, in slaves and ivory for their assistance. These men, if they find themselves strong enough, are exceedingly prone to attack a village without any pretext at all, and instances have been known of their plundering the caravans of other Arabs, and also of their joining with men who, like Mirambo, are at war with the settlers. However, in Mirambo's own case, there are none with him, as when one or two offered to join him, he killed them, saying, "Traitors once, traitors always." The slaves, &c., collected by these men they easily dispose of to the Arabs settled in Unyanyembe, as they can be kept at the outlying villages till all question about them has passed away.

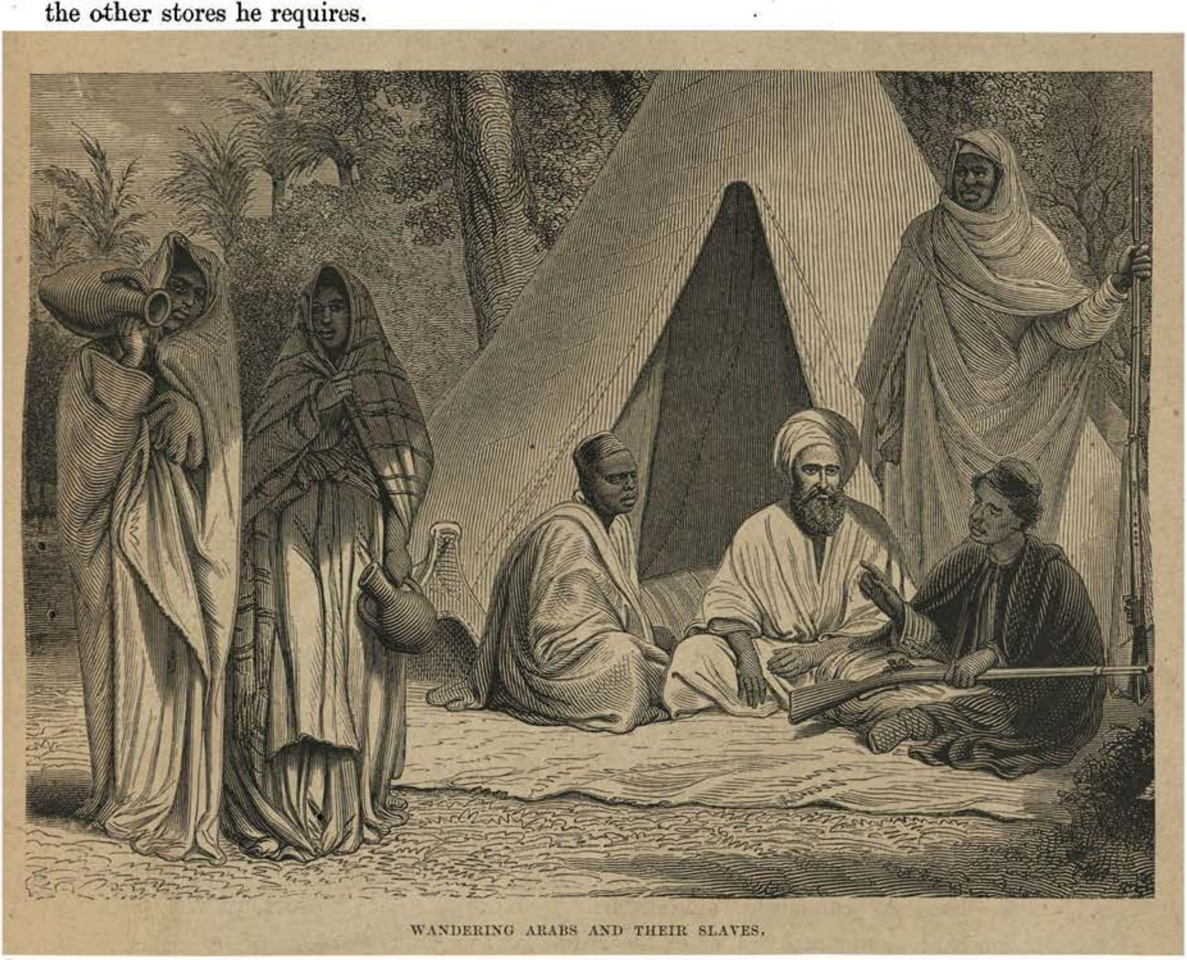
2nd. The trade as carried on by the natives themselves. (*a*) At present, and as far as I can judge, parties of Ruga Ruga, or banditti, infest the whole country, who snatch one or two people out of the fields, or plunder small caravans, and sometimes, when in great force, attacking a village, and perhaps, though very rarely, a large caravan. These parties are composed of men who, when at home, are looked upon as respectable members of society, but who carry on their business some thirty or forty miles away from their own villages. They either bring the produce of their robberies into Unyanyembe, or wait till an agent of the Arabs comes round on a purchasing expedition. (*b*) Petty wars are constantly taking place, and the captives are always made slaves, sometimes sold, and sometimes retained by their captors to work the ground. (*c*) Stronger tribes make forays on weaker and adjoining ones, as is constantly the case in Ugara and Uvinga, where the people harry the unfortunate inhabitants of Kawende, whenever they think they require slaves, or the fancy takes them. I am told that the Arabs



A NEGRO FAMILY IN FRENCH GUIANA.

also, when unable to find sufficient carriage here, send armed parties into Kawende in order to make up the deficiency. (*d*) There are also a number of runaway slaves who have their head-quarters not very far from Ugogo, who subsist entirely by the slave trade and plundering. (*e*) The preceding may be considered the normal modes in which slaves are obtained; but there is at present abnormal cause for a large amount, viz., the war between Marambo and the Arabs.

Marambo by no means confines himself to attacks on the Arabs and their allies, but everywhere he goes, if the people do not side with him, he destroys their villages and carries off all he can as slaves, whom he easily disposes of by means of the tribes who are supposed to be friendly to the Arabs, whilst in reality they are his allies, and supply him with powder and all the other stores he requires.



WANDERING ARABS AND THEIR SLAVES.

About the slave trade here [Ujiji], with regard to the slaves brought from the other side of the lake [Tanganyikà], I am not at present in a position to say anything; but when I know more I will write about it as opportunity offers.

Since leaving Unyanyembé I have passed large tracts of country which have been depopulated by this infernal traffic."

With a view to the suppression of the slave trade, an English squadron has been for a number of years stationed on the East Coast of Africa, but with results so little in keeping with the expense incurred, that it might almost as well have been in the English channel or at the Nore. The reason is not difficult to seek. In 1829 we signed a treaty with the Sultan of Zanzibar, by which a certain portion of the territory of the Imaun of Muscat was ceded to him. In return he was allowed to import slaves for his domestic use, and that of his subjects, but was not permitted to send any north of a certain limit. The result was that for some time past the slave trade has been very prosperous. If a dhow, or native boat, were captured, it was probable that she had on board "domestic slaves" only, and had to be let go. The dhows are swift sailers, and before the wind can give a smart chase to a slow steamer (and these seem to be the kind selected for the East African squadron). Accordingly many escape. The slaves which pass through the Custom House at Bagamoyo, on the mainland opposite Zanzibar island and town, pay a duty of two dollars to the Sultan. But these are a mere moiety of those sent off. Many are smuggled over to Zanzibar from different points of the Coast, and others are despatched Northward, out of the Sultan's dominions, in defiance of the cruisers or at the risk of being captured. Altogether, not less than 50,000, it has been calculated, are yearly sent off from the East Coast of Africa. Matters were so unsatisfactory that in 1873 Sir Bartle Frere formed a treaty with the Sultan of Zanzibar—who, it must be confessed, was a rather unwilling signatory—that no more slaves should be imported into Zanzibar, and that he should do everything in his power to suppress the traffic, by punishing his subjects engaged in it, and otherwise checking it. In return he is allowed an annual pension to compensate him for the loss he will sustain by the withdrawal from his exchequer of the old impost on slaves. Whether this measure will be successful is dubious. It may conceal the traffic from the eyes of our cruisers, for the Arab traders, by the last accounts, are now driving their gangs of slaves northward along the Coast, so as to avoid capture by the war-ships. This will intensify the horrors of the trade, and is only to be stopped by forming strong stations at certain points where the gangs—from the conformation of the country—must pass. This is being done by the Church Missionary Society, and the Free Church of Scotland; but, without military protection, the risks of the slavers falling on the "Infidel" mission stations, and capturing the semi-civilised flock, will be great. It was to exterminate this traffic that all Livingstone's efforts were devoted of late years, and his writings teem with descriptions of the horrors of the trade.* It is, therefore, rather surprising to find Lieut. Cameron declaring that the slaves are nearly always—the exceptions only sufficing to prove the rule—"well fed, kindly treated, and looked after." The exceptions must be very numerous, or the exaggerations great, for men of much greater experience on the East African Coast and in the interior invariably tell a different tale. The Rev. Charles New, who has for ten years resided on this coast, describes the East African slave trade as being as great, in its horrors, as was the former West African trade, and equal to that of the Nile at the present day:—

"The march to the Coast is one of the most terrible things connected with the traffic. To men performing the journey willingly, with substantial rations, and no burden to carry, it is severe; but for those who are being forcibly conveyed from their homes and all they hold dear, their necks galling and jolted almost to dislocation in the prong of the rough branch by which they are secured; with heavy chains on their hands, backs smarting under frequent blows, loins lank with starvation, and tongues withered with thirst; with burdens upon their heads, and still heavier ones on their hearts; for women similarly situated, but with the addition of children alternately tugging vainly at their breasts and screaming on their hips; for children, unused as they are to such long walks, hungry, footsore, and worn;—for *such* the journey to the Coast must be the horror of horrors. Before the march has been continued many days a man grows sick, and is soon unable to move; the lash no longer starts him; he sinks helplessly to the earth; curses fall thick upon him; he is quickly unyoked; and, leaving him there to die, the gang proceeds. A little farther on a woman becomes so weak and emaciated that she cannot continue the march, so her child being taken from her arms, and committed to the charge of another before her eyes, *she* is disconnected, and, with the coarsest abuse for interrupting the march of the sublime *cortége* (?), she, too, is left behind. Or a mother, by dint of an Almighty love for her child, holds out with superhuman strength; she *will not give way;* but, unable to supply the child with the necessary nutriment, the little one dies; *he* becomes a useless incumbrance, and despite the mother's shrieks, and the hot, scalding tears that course their way down her swarthy cheeks, he is torn from her arms, and is tossed aside into the tall grass as if he were a dog. At night the hyenas make a meal of all three! Next come the terrors of the 'middle passage'—and that these are sufficiently terrible the miserable creatures taken out of the filthy overloaded dhows abundantly prove. Cargoes have been landed in Zanzibar in such a state that they were not worth paying the two dollars per head on them at the custom-house, and met the fate of all damaged goods by being allowed to go to waste."

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* For instance, in his posthumous journals the following passage occurs:—"We passed a woman tied by the neck to a tree, and dead. The people of the country explained that she had been unable to keep up with the other slaves in a gang, and her master had determined that she should not become the property of any one else if she recovered after resting for a time. I may mention here that we saw others tied up in a similar manner, and one lying in the path shot or stabbed, for she was in a pool of blood. The explanation we got invariably was that the Arab who owned these victims was enraged at losing his money by the slaves becoming unable to march, and vented his spleen by murdering them; but I have nothing more than common report in support of attributing this enormity to the Arabs."

THE AFRICAN FREEDMAN.

The Negro is the race which has, perhaps, travelled farther than any other, the Anglo-Saxon excepted. The Briton goes to every part of the world, but (with the exception of some of the early settlers of Australia, who reached the Antipodes, owing to a difference of opinion between them and their country regarding the interpretation of the laws *in re* larceny and such like)—generally of his own accord. He becomes the founder of colonies—the populator of greater Britains—the builder of new Troys, destined to surpass the old one. The Jew, persecuted by the conquerors of his country, and avaricious in the pursuit of gain, has also—though never a nation great in numbers—spread into every land. But the Negro is in no case a coloniser. In every case he has spread unwittingly, and by the force of the stronger carrying him into slavery. In more enlightened times he has, in most cases, become a freedman in the countries where he was formerly a bondsman; and in every case is destined to effect a remarkable influence, it is feared always for evil—at least not for any marked good—on the country where he or his fathers became unwilling settlers. In the United States the question of Negro slavery caused a civil war. It is an open subject of debate whether or not the question of the freedmen will not, in course of time, again steep the country in blood. It has already been the cause of riots in which blood has been shed in both the Southern and the Northern States. Ignorant, uneducated, with many of the superstitions which his Obi-men brought from Africa, unable to estimate the value of his newly-acquired freedom at its just value, or how to reap the truest advantages from it, the Negro has become a pest in the Southern States, and a something from behind which the wily politician has to operate in the North. In many cases, left to himself, and as helpless as a child, or as a wild animal escaped from confinement, he is relapsing into barbarism and misery. Here and there he has made a proper use of his freedom. But these cases must not be held up as typical examples of the "freedman," any more than the educated pig must be pointed out by social naturalists, as representing the character and condition of the *Sus scrofa* in general.

Wherever I have met the Negro in the British Colonies—where he, if not so much treated as a political pet, as in the Northern United States, or the subject of such virulent disputes, is yet much more independent and freer than "at home"—I have found him tolerably well-behaved, but pig-headed, and just a little too fond of putting himself forward, and apt, if a little civility were shown him, to get familiar and impertinent. When we speak of the Negroes we must, however, remember that most of them in America are more or less mixed with European blood, and that these people are frequently as much Europeans as Africans.

In the West Indies the freeing of the slaves was a philanthropic act, but commercially it was the ruin of most of the islands. Able to obtain a living by a day or two's labour, either for the whites, or in his "provision ground," he has entirely relapsed into laziness and idleness, only to be roused from his apathy into brutal ferocity by the teaching of demagogues, as in the Jamaica rebellion of 1864. In islands teeming with free Negroes, Coolies from India and China have to be imported to cultivate the estates; but the labour is insufficient, and in Jamaica a sugar plantation is nowadays looked upon in pretty much the light of a "white elephant" by the owner. He gets in return scant justice from the planter, but is not likely ever to be a cause of the same political disturbance as in the United States.*

In the Spanish republics the Negro always, in his turn, assists in the fortnightly revolutions to which these unhappy political experiments are subject. When one gets accustomed to revolutions they are looked upon with no more dread than are earthquakes; it is only one set of rogues succeeding another.

In other cases the Negroes have relapsed into savagedom, just like tame animals if left to themselves, and form, as in the case of the "bush Negroes" in Guiana, tribes of formidable savages.

In Brazil and the Dutch colonies the "Negro question" is hardly as yet raised. In Africa we have at least two semi-colonial settlements of freedmen of a civilised type—Sierra Leone and Liberia.

The first was founded as an asylum and settlement for slaves captured by the cruisers. It is now a populous town where the Negro reigns supreme. Every Government official—with the exception of the Governor—is more or less touched with the prevailing ebony complexion. It is, in a word, a paradise of black men, where the possession of a white face is a disgrace, and a white man something to be insulted; he fares but poorly before a black jury. The "S'a Leone" Negro is a very loyal man, and talks very loudly about being an Englishman. Two Negro policemen having attempted to arrest a Frenchman, he rapidly put them to flight by the sight of a pair of pistols. "Ah!" cried the two constables as they retreated to the door, "we no care for you one —— Frenchman—tink you forgot *we win Waterloo!*—eh?"

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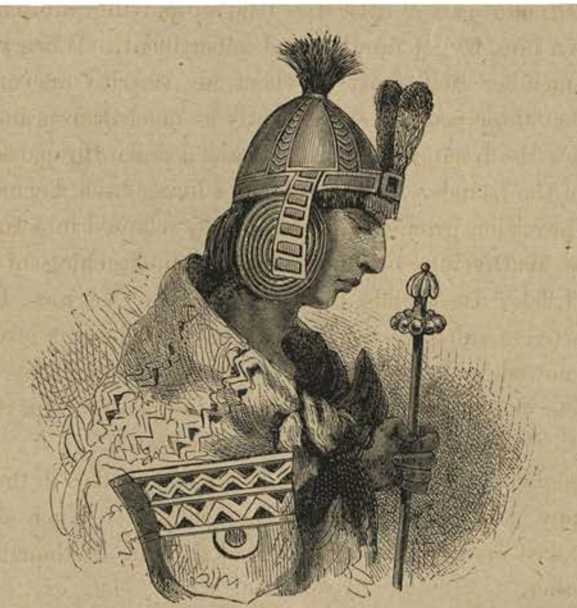
* In thus speaking of the vexed "Negro question," the writer must in justice acknowledge that he has the misfortune to differ from many of those whose calmness of judgment on other social problems he would not lightly question. In regard to the Negro himself, if he has any prejudice, it is on the side of the African, rather than against him.

This may serve as an example of this not very moral town, where the Caucasian is at a discount, and the Negro, to use the American phrase, is decidedly "on the fence."

Liberia is a republic of American Negroes, where everything is a parody of the greater republic from whence they came. Monrovia is the capital. The colony is kept up by a philanthropic society in America, which supports each individual for the first six months. It is tolerably prosperous, and "beyond that itch for preaching which seems to torment Ethiopic humanity," the last accounts I have of it represent the settlement as tolerably prosperous. If they do imitate the mother country, and have now and then a little political disturbance, it hurts nobody but themselves.


HUASCAS, FIFTEENTH EMPEROR OF THE INCAS (vol. i., p. 314).

In the Seychelles the freed slaves became such a nuisance that the Government was petitioned to shoot no more of that kind of cargo on the coasts of that little-heard-of colony, and it is just now rather puzzled where to land this kind of contraband deportees, unless settlements are formed for the purpose on the East Coast (see page 194).

At Zanzibar there are many freedmen as well as slaves, who, if they only knew their strength, could send the less physically powerful Arab flying out of the land. They take service as porters, and if one of them become a small capitalist to "go into" the slave trade is his first thought. Some are seamen on board coasting vessels, but are inherently lazy, dishonourable, and dishonest. They are, if they have any religion, Mohammedans, their former masters taking care that in name at least they are so. But most are barbarians. "Should any one happen to have anything specially to communicate to his master in camp," writes Captain Speke, "he will enter giggling, sidle up to a pole of a hut, commence scratching his back with it, then stretch and yawn, and gradually, in bursts of loud laughter, slip down to the ground on his stern, when he drums with his hands on the top of a box until summoned to know what he has at heart, when he delivers himself in a peculiar manner, laughs and yawns again, and saying it is time to go, walks off in the same way as he came. At other times, when he is called, he will come sucking away at the spout of a teapot, or scratching his naked arm-pits with a table knife, or, perhaps, polishing the plates for dinner with his dirty loin-cloth. If sent to market to purchase a fowl, he comes back with a cock tied by the legs to the end of a stick, swinging and squalling in the most piteous manner. Then, arrived at the cook shop, he throws the bird down on the ground, holds its head between his toes, plucks the feathers to bare its throat, and then, raising a prayer, cuts its head off." On the march, his conduct is of a character in keeping with that in camp. Everything he tumbles topsy-turvy. He will carry a sack of flour hung over your best rifle as a pole, and run along, giggling, at a jogtrot, thinking no more about his load than if it had been a stone. Economy, forethought, or care never enters his head. The fair sex is his greatest delight, and after them come beer, a song, and a dance. He is wonderfully loquacious, without stability, his laugh always "hung on a hair trigger," ready to go off at a moment's notice, a creature of impulse, a grown child. The philanthropist has his work laid out for him before he can convert the African freedman into a civilised being, capable of conducting his affairs on anything but an African model. And the sooner he knows it the better.

CHAPTER XII.

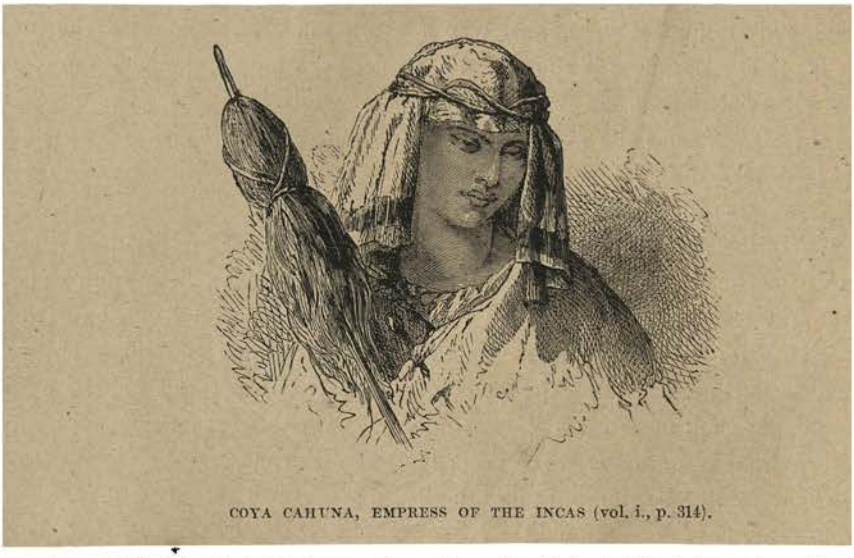
THE DECAY OF WILD RACES.

THERE is perhaps no subject of ethnological inquiry which has excited more attention among travellers and writers, and at the same time has excited the imagination of people who are neither travellers nor writers, than the manner in which savages disappear before the march of civilisation, or soon after the white man reaches their country. I might also add, that I know no subject in which the imagination of those who have discussed it has been allowed to go more astray, or in which fewer facts have been administered, as a physician would say, in a greater menstruum of words. Briefly, much sentimental nonsense has been spoken on the subject, and though I believe much will still be spoken by those whose interest it is to conceal facts, I consider that this forms a proper period in our survey of "mankind, from China to Peru," to discuss the subject. We are now leaving—with the exception of a visit we shall yet have to pay to the Hill tribes of India—the savage races, and shall in future have to deal with civilised and more or less polished races altogether. That the subject should have excited attention is not strange. Nations come and go, rise into greatness and give place to others, but they do not disappear. Greece has long ago fallen from its greatness, but there are still Greeks—probably as numerous as ever they were. The Romans have decreased in power, but probably not in numbers; and the heterogeneous races which once assembled within the walls of Babylon and Nineveh, though these cities are now mounds of dust, exist in the form of their descendants among the wandering races around. The great cities of antiquity were no more inhabited by one race than are the modern ones. They were even less so, for the never-ending wars and conquests brought thousands of slaves and other captives to swell the teeming population that took refuge within them.

But the Tasmanians have disappeared; the Australians (Figs., pp. 201, 204), are following them; the West Africans are decreasing; and more markedly than all, the once numerous aboriginal population of America has so decreased since it came into contact with the whites, that it will soon almost entirely cease to exist. How is this? Ask the sentimentalist, and he will tell you that "it is a law of Nature"—that before the breath of civilisation the savage will give way to make room for the white. In reply to this, I can only reply in the words of Bishop Selwyn: "They had heard it said that it was a law of Nature that the coloured race should melt away before the advance of civilisation. He would tell them where that law was registered: it was registered in hell, and its agents were those whom Satan made twofold more the children of hell than himself." The language is somewhat forcible, even for a Colonial bishop; yet in its *general* principle it is not untrue. The disappearance of wild races before the civilised is, for the greater part, as explicable as the destruction of wild animals before civilised sportsmen.

Tribes have been decreasing before the advent of the whites, but with that we have nothing to do, though in the preceding chapters on the African races I have touched here and there on that question. In the meantime it is only with the savage *versus* the civilised man that we have to deal. In discussing the question, I will take my illustrations chiefly from the American races among whom I travelled extensively in 1863, 1864, 1865, and 1866, and from among the Eskimo of both sides of Davis Straits, whom I visited in 1861 and 1867, chiefly because they serve as excellent illustrations of the principles I propose espousing on the subject, and also for the reason that I am more intimately acquainted with these races than with any others. I have, therefore, purposely omitted, when describing the Eskimo and Americans, to mention certain facts which might be more appropriately discussed here. I will, however, draw illustrations from other tribes or nationalities.

The subject of the gradual decrease of savage races before the approach of the whites is a matter of such notoriety that it is only necessary to mention it to be received without any extensive special pleading. Nowhere has it been more noted than among the races of North and South America. The decay of the Aztecs of Mexico and Central America is well known. I have heard it estimated by intelligent Americans resident in New Mexico, that the ruined towns and villages of these territories must have contained, before the arrival of Columbus, millions of men; and Clavijero says (1780) that the Aztec empire must have contained many millions more people than were found there by the filibustering band under Cortez. No better proof can be adduced for this than the mere fact that it was customary in their grand forty-day feasts and orgies to sacrifice from 20,000 to 30,000—sometimes even 50,000—prisoners. The races which covered the United States and the Canadas at their first settlements are now driven from bank to wall, compressed in small numbers within a few "reservations." I do not believe that they now exceed 600,000 souls. The same is true of the country to the west of the Rocky Mountains, where, though the races are still numerous and to a great extent in their primitive condition, the numbers do not nearly equal the former population. In Vancouver Island, where I am very familiarly acquainted with every tribe and nearly every village, this admits of more particular demonstration. In every quiet bay and creek are remains of what must at one time have been fortified villages, the names of which only live now by tradition. The earliest notice we have of these tribes is in the narratives of Cook, Meares, Vancouver, and other early explorers and traders, and, compared with our present knowledge, these accounts show a remarkable decrease, notwithstanding the fact that a vast portion of these races live in the most primitive condition. In 1795, Meares calculated the number of Indians to the southward of Nootka Sound, as far as lat. 45° or 46° North (comprehending a portion of Washington Territory, U. S.), to amount "at least to near 60,000," a calculation made from the number of their villages, each of which contained from six to nine hundred people. To the northward, as far as 61°, they were even more numerous, and without knowing anything of the thickly-inhabited shores of the eastern side of the island, he roughly calculated the population, from the parallels of 61° to 45° or 46° North (a little north and south of the British boundary lines), at 100,000 people. All the Coast was dotted with villages, full of athletic warriors, who carried things with a high hand along the wild shores of "Quadra and Vancouver Island." The inhabitants of Friendly Cove, Nootka Sound, amounted, in Meares' time, to between 3,000 and 4,000 people, and he mentions that it had undergone no changes since Cook's visit in 1776, when the population was estimated at 2,000. The whole people in the Sound numbered 10,000, and those in the vicinity of Clayoquot Sound about 13,000. Their boundaries must at one time have been more extensive, as evinced by Meares' lists of the territories over which Wiccannish ruled—many of which I recognise as familiar names of tribes now quite independent—though Setakanim was the last chief receiving tribute, and exercising authority over very large tracks. For instance, at that period (1795), Wiccannish (the rival and contemporary of Moquinna of Nootka, whose grandson still governs there) is said to have ruled over—

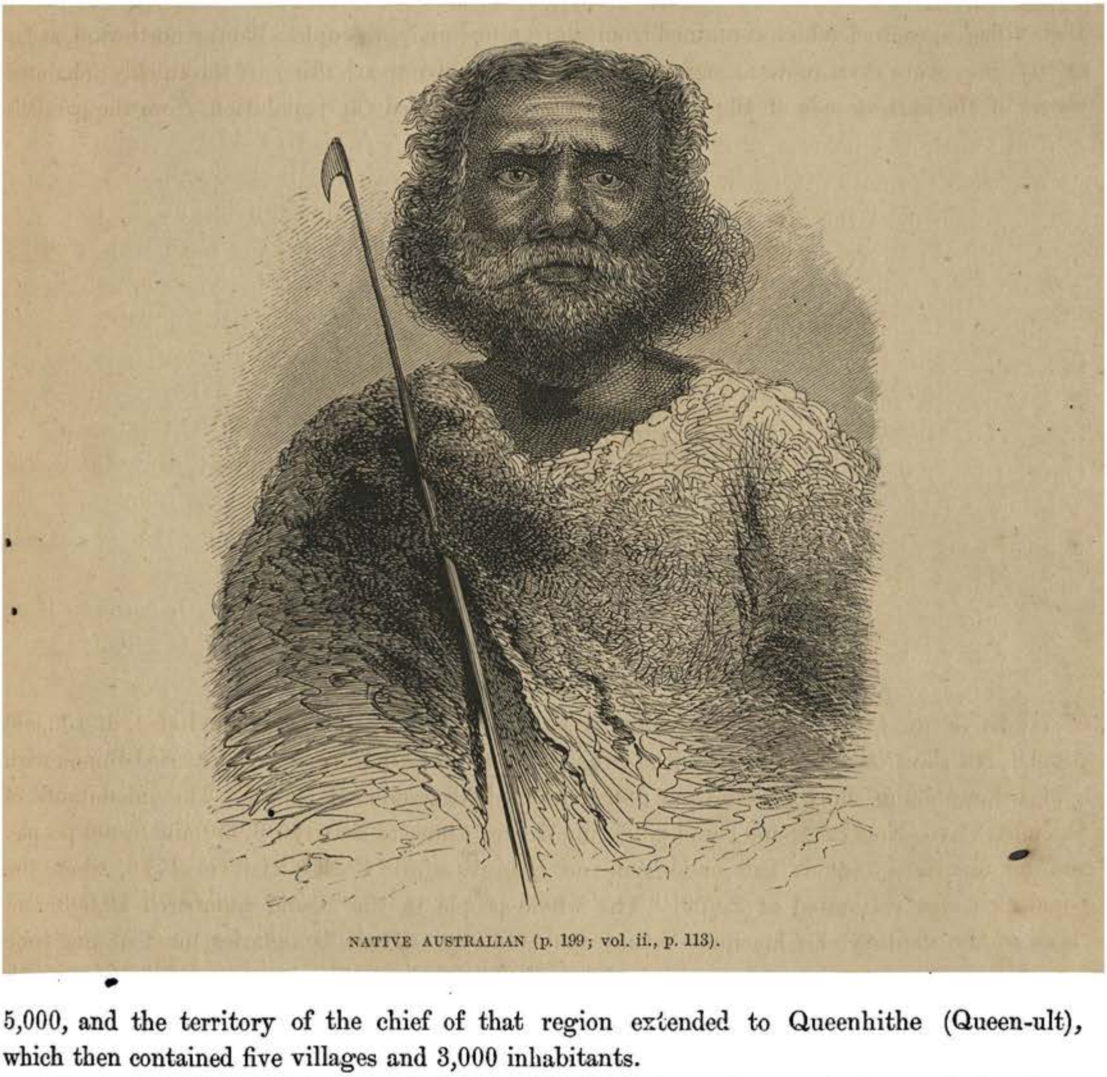


COYA CAHUNA, EMPRESS OF THE INCAS (vol. i., p. 314).

Chaisett (Cheshusaht),
How-schiuck-se-lett (Howchucklesaht),
Uthu-wel-ett (Ukluluaht),
Nitt-a-natt (Nittenaht),
Qu-quæt (Kaioquaht),
Chaeset (Shesaht), &c. &c.

Some of those mentioned by him are extinct, or I cannot make them out, from the fact of their being villages now abandoned, or of such small importance that I never have heard of them; not allowing for an experienced person meeting much difficulty in taking down Indian names, no two savages appearing, unless the name is often repeated, to pronounce it in the same manner, and no two travellers adopting the same system of orthography. Meares thought the population was even underrated in numbers.

The population of Tatooche (Tatooche Island, Washington Territory) he estimated at 5,000, and the territory of the chief of that region extended to Queenhithe (Queen-ult), which then contained five villages and 3,000 inhabitants.



NATIVE AUSTRALIAN (p. 199; vol. ii., p. 113).

Vancouver estimated the population of the Nuchultaw village, at Cape Mudge (now removed farther up Discovery Passage, at present a poor affair, though at that time considered impregnable to native assault), at 300, and Cheslakees village, at the mouth of the Nimpkish, at 500. It is sometimes difficult to arrive at the number of independent tribes; certain villages, though virtually independent, being tributary to some great chief, and being claimed by him as his possessions, though formerly distinct tribes.

Again, some villages consist of a single tribe, and other tribes have many villages, so, unless you are thoroughly acquainted with their migrations, you may be apt (as the Naval surveyors have done more than once) to give the population of a village twice over, by finding the same people, though unknown to you, inhabiting different villages at different seasons. Again, tribes are getting extinct, the remnants joining with others, while some are revolting and becoming independent; but after very careful inquiry and research, I could not estimate the tribes of Vancouver Island, in 1866, at more than 10,000 souls in all, distributed over between forty and fifty petty independent tribes, speaking four languages and several dialects.*

Tribes have even become extinct within historical periods in Vancouver Island. By historical periods I may be understood to mean within the memory of living men. The *Ekkulahts* were a people living on the other side of Stamp's Harbour, at the head of the Alberni Canal, and became extinct about thirty years ago. A man called Keekeean, and his sisters, were the only survivors, and I found them living with the Seshāāhts, many of whom had forgotten even the name of the perished sept. The Quallehums, living at the mouth of the Quallehum River, also became extinct within a recent period; and the same fate befel the once-powerful Puntluchs. The only remnant, comprising three or four individuals, were living with the Jathluthor and Comoucs at Port Augusta, speaking yet their own language, and the latter tribe I found had divided their lands between themselves and the Nuchultaws of Cape Mudge.

I possess some trading notes of the Hudson's Bay Company, a few of the same nature by Mr. William Eddy Banfield, an intelligent free-trader, who was killed by the Ohiahts some years ago, and some by the late Colonel Coloquohn-Grant, the first settler in Vancouver Island outside of the Fur Company, in which are estimates of the numbers of the tribes, so far as they had occasion to have intercourse with them. These notes were made at various intervals, and forcibly demonstrate the decrease of these people.

The same is true of the Queen Charlotte Islands (Vol. i., pp. 36, 103), a group lying forty or fifty miles off the mainland of British Columbia. The people of these islands (comprehending several tribes under the name of Hydahs) are, we have seen, a remarkably fine race of men, excelling in mechanical skill, and athletic beyond all the races of the coast lying south of them. Fifteen or twenty years ago they were estimated at 10,000. They do not number at the present time more than 5,000 people, if so many. When I visited them in the spring of 1866, I was pointed out places once thickly peopled with villages where there are now no inhabitants, and the names of the tribes once living there have become almost forgotten. A son of one of the chiefs who acted as interpreter, coolly, with the utmost *sang froid*, calculated on his fingers the number of years which would elapse before his race would become extinct. If I recollect rightly this patriotic youth estimated that *denouement* at ten years, and informed me, moreover, that as soon as his father died, and he could convert his properties in available funds, he intended taking up his residence among the whites, lying

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* In the abstract of a paper read before a learned body some time ago, professing to be an account of the races of Vancouver Island, among other absurdities I find the *Shouswaāp* and *Atnahs* noted as tribes of that island. The former is a horse-tribe of British Columbia, living at least 400 miles from the country where their *habitat* is placed, while the latter is no tribe at all, but it is a term applied by the Takully, Takali or carriers of the north of British Columbia to any other tribe with whom they are not well acquainted, and signifies "stranger." The people to whom the fur-traders usually apply it is a tribe living on one of the sources of the Naās River in Alaska, several hundreds of miles from any portion of Vancouver Island! (See also vol. i., p. 230.)

700 miles to the southward of his land.* In the course of my travels I would come to villages where there seemed to be no young people at all, and only old men and women saluted the travellers. It was not difficult to foresee the date of their tribal extinction.

The same is true of the mainland of British Columbia, and to a still greater extent in the United States' possessions of Washington Territory, Oregon, Idaho, &c., which have been settled longer by the whites, and where the Transatlantic art of "civilising off the face of the earth" has been going on longer. All who read the early stirring narratives of "enterprise beyond the Rocky Mountains"—Washington Irving's "Astoria," Ross Cox's "Columbia River," "Captain Bonville's Adventures," &c.—will remember the powerful tribe of Chinooks (p. 205), whose chief, one-eyed Concomely, figures largely in these works. Though his fame has not died out of the North-West, yet the people over whom he governed have become almost extinct. You may sail up the noble Columbia for hundreds of miles, and, with the exception of a stray one "out on pass," you may never see an Indian, and that in a region which ten or fifteen years ago was the stronghold of their race. Ask where they are, and you will be directed to a few "reservations," established by the Government of the United States on the "mission system," where the last remnant of the race drags out a wretched existence—a "stove-pipe hat" with a piece of looking-glass in front, a soldier's coat, and the patronage of a "parental government," supplying but a poor substitute for their pristine independence!"† There is scarcely a Cowlitz now in existence, though within the memory of young men they were once a powerful race. I could multiply cases *ad infinitum* did space permit or the argument require it. One instance which much impressed me at the time will not be out of place in concluding these scattered remarks. I had a hunter in my employ, famous among the hunters and trappers of the North-West as "One-armed Toma,"‡ whose father was an Iriquois from Canada, and his mother an Indian of one of the Columbia River tribes. Early in life he entered the service of the Great Fur Company, and in the stirring life of a "partizan" almost forgot the village of his birth. Twenty years afterwards, having a little more of the world's goods than is usually possessed by these improvident vagabonds, he bethought himself of visiting his mother's people, of whose welfare, or otherwise, he had heard but little during this long interval. The North-West was not in those days so much traversed as it is now, but after many days' journeying he arrived in the vicinity of his former home. By the banks of the foaming Columbia he saw the village, but choked up by nettles, and, after looking around for some time, he espied a little lodge almost in ruins, in which sat, cowering over a fire, an aged man, nearly blind. Toma told him who he was, his father and his mother's name, and begged to know where were the companions of his boyhood; the hunters whose deeds he oft aspired to equal; the old men and women to whose councils he had once on a time listened. "Ah! my son," the old man answered, "they are all dead—I am the chief and the last of my tribe. They all died of small-pox. I often hear their *tomanawos*[*] in the woods at night, when the owls hoot, and the bad snakes live in their lodges—*en-en-na!*"[†]

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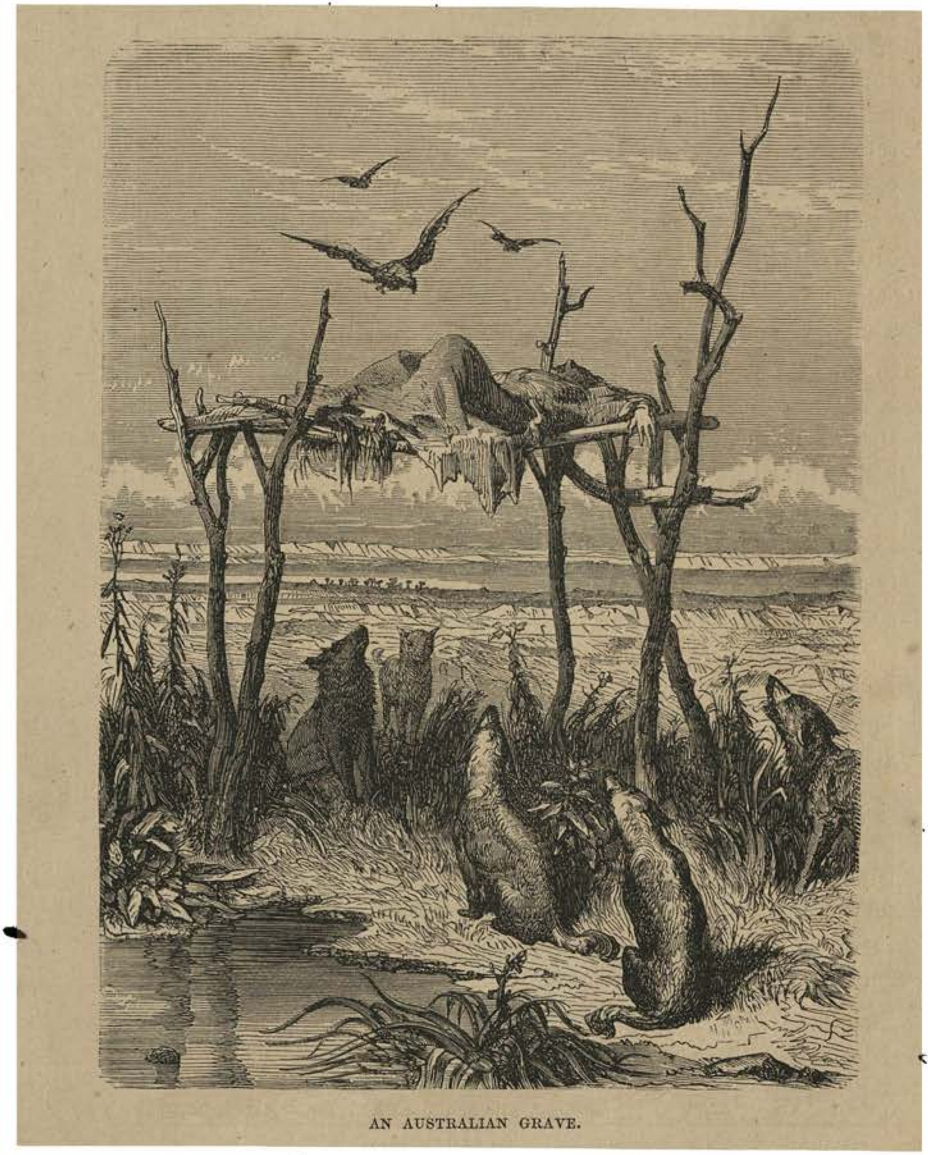
* See also my paper on the "Physical Geography of the Queen Charlotte Islands," "Proceedings of the Royal Geographical Society," 1869, and Petermann's "Geographische Mittheilungen," 1870.

† "Reservation" Indians never decrease in numbers, according to the agents' reports to the Indian bureau at Washington. Those who are acquainted with the mode of distributing the annuities and the "smart" nature of their administration require no explanation of this interesting ethnological occurrence. I should be sorry to speak of all the officers of the Indian department as I have heard them spoken of by Americans of all classes. I am glad to think that I know not a few individual instances of that rarest of *raræ aves*—an honest Indian agent. Those who would desire to know something more of this famed mission system, I should refer to Mr. J. Ross Browne's "California Washoe, and other Papers" (Harper, New York); and, for the other side of the picture, to the annual "Reports of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs." The theory is excellent; it is the practice to which I object!

‡ I have described this worthy in my papers on the "First Journey of Exploration across Vancouver Island" in "Illustrated Travels," 1869.



AN AUSTRALIAN GRAVE.

If the present rate of extermination decay goes on, I daresay the day may not be far distant when an Indian may be looked upon in Vancouver Island, British Columbia, or Oregon, with as much curiosity as in Boston, Washington, or New York, and when his language may be as little known in the person of the spokesman as the one which Humboldt mentions. He found a parrot among the Maypuris whose language nobody understood because it spoke Ature words, and that race had become extinct! (Vol. i., p. 287.) The Australians are rapidly becoming extinct; and the New Zealanders have a proverb that as the native rat has disappeared before the European rat, as the native weeds disappear before the imported ones, so will the Maori disappear before the white man.

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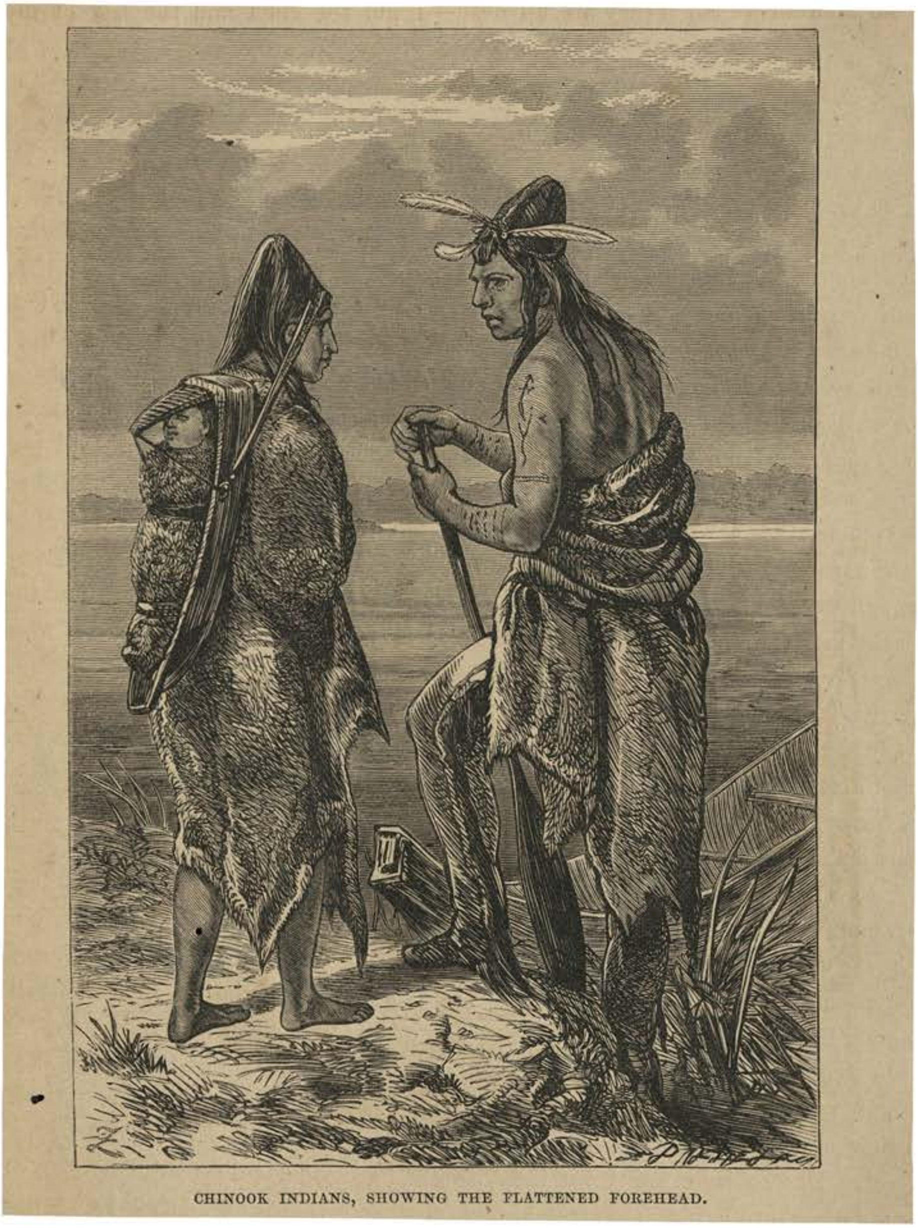
[*] Ghosts. [†] Form of exclamation.



CHINOOK INDIANS, SHOWING THE FLATTENED FOREHEAD.

I will now proceed to inquire what is the cause of this decrease, because some question involved in the non-fertility of savage women, after bearing children by white men, and other points of that nature have been adduced in support of one theory of the depopulation of savage countries before the march of civilisation. First of all, let us premise that this decrease of race has been going on before the white set his foot on the American continent, as the ancient burying-grounds of Chiriqui, in the Isthmus of Panama* and elsewhere abundantly testify. It cannot, however, be denied that their decrease has gone on in a much greater ratio since the advent of the white man on the continent than before. I will, however, endeavour to show that any causes connected with hybridisation, or mycegenation have little or nothing to do with it, and that this "fading away before the foot of the pale face" is due to some very prosaic means. Among these tribes I could never find that the Hybrids, or "Half-breeds," as they are familiarly termed, died out, or that marriage between half-breeds were infertile (as M. Paul Broca has attempted to prove). On the contrary, they had always very large families as a rule; and the Red River settlement, almost until recently composed of half-breeds, is, I am informed on the very excellent authority of the much-esteemed Catholic Bishop of that territory, actually on the increase, and this increase has been going on for many years entirely independent of any immigration, which until recently was unknown. I can understand that a half-breed, the parents of which belong to widely-separated races, would be sickly, just as a hybrid between two widely-separated species of plants or animals would be. Neither have I ever heard or noticed that after a woman has had children by a white man she will be infertile by an Indian. Since the date of my observations other travellers have noted the same in reference to Africans and other races.

After a careful study of the subject whilst resident among the tribes of North-West America, and in the frontier settlements of that great region, I am convinced that the decrease of the races in that section of America at least is due to the following causes, which I shall discuss *seriatim*:—

(1.) *Small Pox.*—This has been the plague of every Indian race, and I think there is little doubt but that it was introduced by the whites, and meeting fit subjects for its propagation, committed most fearful ravages among the American races. It ought, however, to be noticed (as erroneous notions on this subject prevail) that small-pox was known among the Indians before Vancouver made his explorations, as he found people much marked by that disease, and some had even lost their eyesight through it. Though we have no record of vessels making explorations of the bottom of De Fucas Straits before that navigator, yet, as the natives expressed no astonishment at the sight of his vessels, it is more than probable that they had been in communication with the whites before his visit. Indeed, small-pox may be propagated from tribe to tribe. Since Vancouver's time the disease has committed great havoc among the Indian races, the epidemic taking starts every now and then, and depopulating villages and tribes. In the winter of 1862-3, the tribes of Vancouver Island and the neighbouring coasts, more particularly in the vicinity of Victoria, were visited by an epidemic of this sort. The Indians fled from the villages in horror, only to die in the woods, the dead lay unburied in their lodges, and it was calculated that upwards of 1,000 died in the southern section of the island. The tribes at Nanaimo were ordered by the magistrate to whitewash the interior of their board-lodges, and almost escaped. Numbers of Queen Charlotte Islanders were in Victoria on their annual visit and fled North, but they carried the germs of the disease with them. After paddling northward they halted, according to custom, on an island for a favourable opportunity to cross to their homes, but whilst so waiting the disease broke out amongst them, and not a man, woman, or child escaped. Some months afterwards their skeletons, with all their property, were found on the island. Though several hundreds died by this disease, yet their countrymen resident in the Queen Charlotte Islands escaped. The extinction of the Mandans on the Missouri River within the last few years by this disease is a fact well known to all those familiar with American ethnology; it is also decimating the African races (p. 158). [See also vol. i., p. 220].

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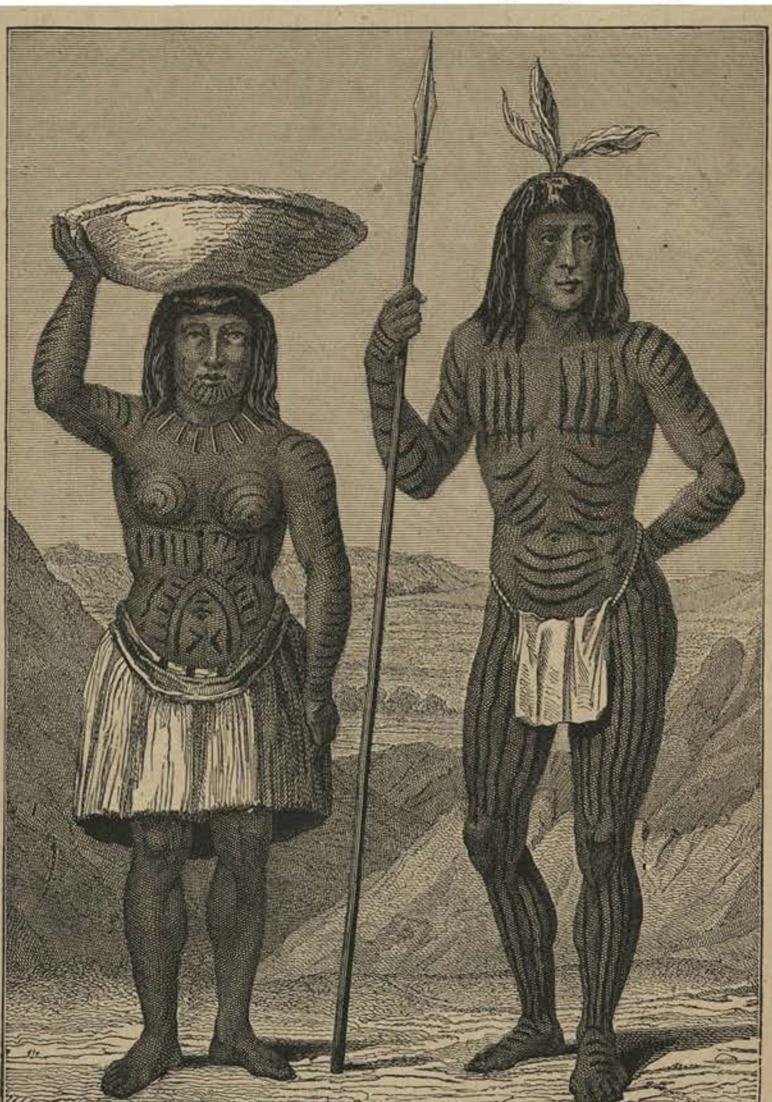
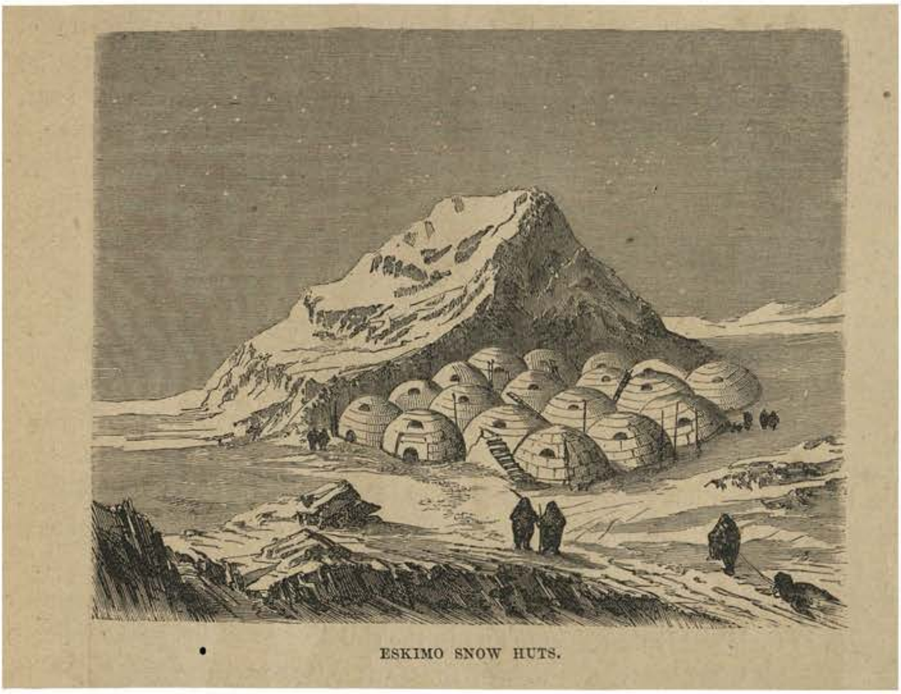
* A curious circumstance came to my ears whilst resident in the Isthmus. A Panama pearl merchant who bought some 1,300 oz. of the gold ornaments found in the tombs, told me that he lost by the speculation, though they were purchased at a very paying margin under the idea that of course they were pure gold, but on assaying them afterwards it was found that they were *alloyed with copper*, showing most assuredly a high state of civilisation at that remote period (see also vol. i., p. 259).

(2.) *Drunkenness.*—Though some of the Southern tribes, before the advent of the whites, knew the art of manufacturing intoxicating beverages, yet all of the great Northern tribes knew nothing of fire-water until they were taught the abuse of it by the early traders and colonists. The early fur-traders held out as an inducement for their peaceable settlement among the savage men in whose midst they fixed their homes, that they should have all the rum they wanted as long as the rivers flowed in their beds, and the waterfalls went tumbling over the rocks; and though some of the better class of fur-traders, such as the Hudson's Bay and the late Russian Imperial Fur Companies, have prohibited the sale of intoxicating liquors as a regular article of trade, and the British and United States Governments have passed laws against its sale to the natives, the promises of the old peltry-gatherers have not been broken. Owing to the vast portion of the tribes being virtually out of the jurisdiction of any government, and the connivance of unprincipled men, aided by the passive resistance of a party of apathetic people in these territories, states, and colonies, the Indians get as much whiskey as they desire, and only stop buying it when the means of purchasing are gone. Though in Oregon, and other states and provinces, there is a law against its sale to Indians of unmixed blood, yet, owing to scoundrels establishing trading-posts in the immediate neighbourhood of every Indian reservation, or tribe, and where whiskey is the prime article of trade, the law is a dead letter. The profits of the trade are so great that they will bear the payment of the fines if convicted, which is generally very difficult. In the British Provinces the same holds true. Little trading-schooners creep along the Coast, selling the vilest stuff at every village, and moving as soon as possible before the pandemonium of revelry begins in the Indian camp, though not unfrequently these traders fall a victim to *their* victims. In almost every case of murder which I have investigated, I have invariably found that this trade was the prime mover in the crime. The scenes of debauchery in the villages whilst the inhabitants are in a state of intoxication baffle description. An Indian when intoxicated is a madman; no one is safe to approach him; and a debauch never ends without some casualty. Indians are shot by their fellows, and not a few have been executed for murders committed on white men owing to this trade. Numbers die of intoxication, and this cause alone is decimating the Indian race wherever the white man reaches them. I know numbers of Indians on the western shores of Vancouver Island who at my first visit knew nothing of "fire-water," but on my last visits, in 1866, found they had been made acquainted with it through some trader on a visit to Victoria, and had died in a drunken debauch. The love of spirits in these races is beyond control. I have known the Indians tell their agents on the United States reservations, "We know whiskey is killing us—keep it from us—and punish white men who sell it to us, and us if we buy it; but if we see it we must have it." We know what crime and ruin are produced among the lower classes of our towns by drunkenness, but how much more are wrought among a race of untutored savages, beyond control, and when the spirit is of itself absolute poison! I have heard of some scoundrels who absolutely sold camphene to them! An Indian cares very little about the quality so long as it brings on "the drunk," and the greatest contempt that could be expressed by an experienced aboriginal toper regarding a certain trader's whiskey was that—"It swelled out the belly, but it would not make the eyes goggle!"



MOHAVE INDIANS FROM THE COLORADO (vol i., p. 202).

The widespread nature of the traffic was brought most prominently before me in an expedition I made along the eastern shores of Vancouver Island, and a portion of the western seaboard of British Columbia in the spring of 1866. Wherever we passed an Indian village, canoes would put off to us, asking for "lum" (rum); and if we had occasion to anchor in the vicinity of their villages late at night they would come dropping alongside, supposing that we were afraid to sell it before witnesses during the day; and on being assured that none could be got, they would still express incredulity, "*Etsina ! all schoonaw*" men* sell it." Now and then a trader is caught, but owing to the few gunboats on the Coast, and, it must be owned, the lukewarmness of the government, most of them pursue their nefarious traffic unmolested. In the vicinity of the towns small offenders are continually apprehended—(though, as the number of drunken natives testify, many must escape)—and the chain-gang is principally filled by these individuals. I have dwelt at some length on this head, and discussed the subject more fully than perhaps the scientific interest of the matter would claim. But the influence of this cause alone in decimating and weakening the Indian races is so great, and as of late an agitation has been got up in the countries referred to in regard to allowing the Indians to buy liquor freely, possibly the facts mentioned may be of some importance.



ESKIMO SNOW HUTS.

The party referred to argues, with some show of reason, that if the Indians were allowed to purchase spirits like any other class of people, they would purchase the best, only take it when they felt inclined, and do away with the vile set of whiskey-sellers who supply them illicitly, under the present system. It cannot be denied that sailors and other classes deprived for a time of the free use of spirits show equal excess in the use of it, and that Indians would not be more apt to abuse it than the lower class of half-breeds, Sandwich Islanders,† Negroes, or even whites.

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* Most of the small traders use that build of vessel, and hence the term "*Schoonaw* (schooner) men" in contradistinction to the Hudson's Bay Company, who have steamers. *Etsina !* is a common exclamation.

† Curiously enough, the Sandwich Islanders are by their own government prohibited from purchasing intoxicating liquors.

This may be very true, but no one who has ever perused the journals of the old fur-traders under the former system (which I have done, both in MS. and in printed works), and read there of the excesses which were committed at the Indian debauches, and of the daily terror the trader was under for his life, would unhesitatingly legalise such a traffic. I am well aware that many of the Hudson's Bay Company's officers are in favour of this. Setting aside the mere fact that they are interested parties, few of these gentlemen ever saw the traffic really legalised, for it was virtually abolished as a regular article of commerce more than thirty years ago by that Company; and when it was traded they had perfect control of it, being the only fur-traders in the country, so that it could never go to excess, while at the present time competition in trade has reached such an extent, and unprincipled men would push the traffic to such extremes, that neither the lives of the whites nor the existence of the natives could be insured. We have quite enough to blame ourselves with in the treatment of the aborigines in our great colonial possessions, without adding legalised poisoning to our responsibilities, at the beck of any party of men, backed by reasoning ever so specious. It is certainly no compliment to British rule to propose abolishing a law because it is not kept, when it is perfectly notorious that little effort is made to keep it in check—the police being known to be in partnership with the sellers in numberless instances: it is only the small uninfluential sellers who are caught. Let the punishment, both for buying and selling, be sufficiently severe, and we shall soon hear the last of it, or reduce it within the usual limit of broken laws.*

In a former part of this work I had occasion to hint at diseases which were introduced among the native tribes of America and other countries since the advent of the whites (Vol. i., p. 105). Their morality as regards the seventh commandment seems to have been early corrupted, for when Vancouver arrived in 1797, he speaks in anything but complimentary terms regarding the women. Meares at a former date speaks most confidently in a different strain, so that it is probable that the deterioration between the time of his visit and that of Vancouver was owing to the visits of traders, or more likely to the visits of the Spaniards, who for some time held Nootka Sound, from San Blas and Acapulco in Mexico. At all events, with the exception of a few of the more primitive and less accessible tribes, they are now most thoroughly corrupt. The effect is seen in their sickly descendants and in the childless condition of the women. Many of the lower-class whites taking native women for "wives," the women are rising in value; young men cannot afford to marry, or at least so soon as before, while it is rare now to see even a chief with more than two wives. Polygamy does not, as a rule, cause small families, as has been frequently stated in regard to Africa and other countries. Many of the African chiefs have a multitudinous offspring. But the American Indians have naturally much smaller families.

(3.) *Dysentery.*—With the advent of the whites they have also acquired a taste for the food of the whites, and it does not appear to agree with them—producing dysentery and other diseases. Occasionally a whole village will be decimated with this disease after a feast of white men's food; and I remember, while passing through Southern Oregon in 1865, hearing that the Indians around the white settlements were everywhere dying with this disease, and that it principally affected squaws living with white men. This change of regimen has certainly acted prejudically to the race in North West America.

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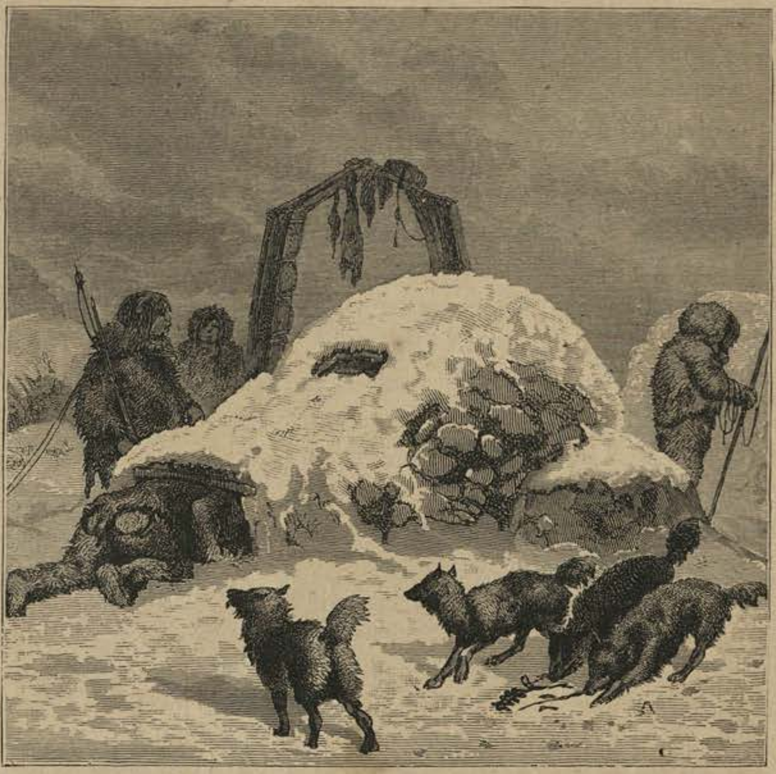
* Those who desire to see a picture of rum-selling to the Indians under the old laws, will do well to consult the quaint narrative of John Long—"Journal of an Indian Trader," &c. Long gravely states the number of lives lost at every debauch, the children's backs broken, &c., as a mere matter of course, troubled with no scruples regarding the propriety of the trade; and his remarks are all the more valuable. "Rum" he calls "the *unum necessarium* of Indian trade." Add to this what an old Indian told me in summing up the experience of his long life: "Ah! chief, there are but two good things in the world—*rum* and *oulachan* oil," and you have a picture of what things would be. (See, for description of "oulachan," a paper by me, in the *Pharmaceutical Journal* for 1868.)

(4.) *War* (*a*) *Intestine war.*—Tribal wars have existed among the Indians of the North-West coast of America from time immemorial, their traditions say ever since Hælse (Vol. i., p. 119) taught them how to make a canoe. The earliest notice of these tribes describes them as never at peace with one another, one tribe being continually arrayed against another for some insult, fancied or real, desire of plunder or slaves, or merely *glory* (*sic*). I have before me notes of some of these tribal wars in old times which must have assumed formidable pretensions indeed (see Vol. i., p. 70); but of late years, owing to the arrival of whites and missionaries, many tribes have discontinued these feuds, though on the western shores of Vancouver Island, and on the north-west coast of British Columbia and Alaska, they are still carried on, and the acquisition of firearms has added terribly to the slaughter in their murderous fights. Many prisoners are taken, and, as we have described in another volume, numbers more are killed, and their heads erected on poles in front of their villages. But the members of whatever tribe engages in the contest—let them be the victors or the conquered—are decreased; and since the introduction of firearms the slaughter has been greater than in former times. "You used to have a great number of warriors once," I said to the young chief of Kyoquot in 1863, "where are they all?" "Killed fighting." "But I thought you always conquered?" "That is very true, Mr. Brown, but conquered or not we always return with fewer warriors, and a warrior lost nowadays *is never born again.*"

The most frequent way in which a tribe loses its identity is in this manner: engaged in frequent wars with its more powerful neighbours, it finally gets so weak as to be unable to maintain its independence, and joins with another tribe, or is carried into slavery by the neighbouring septs. If the latter ensues, the numbers are eventually decreased, since no man likes to give his daughter for wife to a slave. These wars have been going on for a long time, and have much contributed to the decrease of the tribes before their arrival, but the acquisition of firearms, through the Hudson's Bay Company and other traders, has hastened their decimation in a proportion much greater than that of the births.

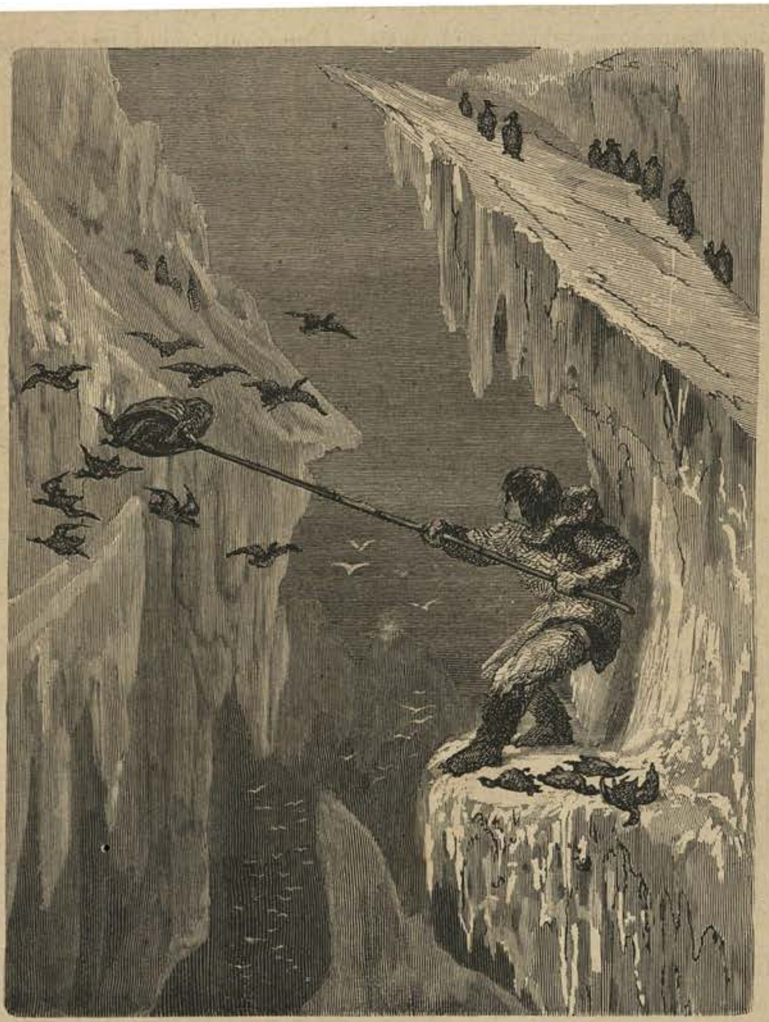
(*b*) *Disturbances with the Whites.*—Since the colonisation of the American Continent by Europeans, measures of offence and defence against the native races have been going on. The Spanish conquerors massacred thousands in war or in cold blood, besides the thousands more which succumbed to disease and fatigue, or destroyed themselves under the Spanish yoke, working in the mines. Of late years the United States have figured most ingloriously in these Indian wars and massacres. I am speaking within the truth when I say that there is no tribe within the boundaries of the United States but has at some time, as the tide of civilisation flowed on, been engaged in hostilities either with the government or with the frontier settlers, and (I am only quoting official authorities) that in nearly every case the whites have been to blame. In general these "wars" commenced by some trivial squabble between the Indians and the whites—a murder by a rude western settler for some supposed theft or injury by the Indian—until the government became embroiled, and a war of extermination on each side ensued, the remnant of the Indians being either subjected or destroyed. As often as not these troubles were commenced by unprincipled scoundrels with an eye to the Indian lands or property, as a means of speculation, or to gratify the desire of vengeance against their savage neighbours. I could quote innumerable instances in support of this statement were it necessary, but none who are at all acquainted with the history of these disgraceful affairs require to be told of such cases. I need only mention the single instance of the Seminole Indian war in Florida (Vol. i., p. 228). The Sioux war within the last few years, and the continual warfare with the other "Plain" tribes, are well known. I am far from defending these massacres by the Indians. On the contrary, no one could have a greater horror of the atrocities committed by these savages, but what I wish to say is, that the people are culpably to blame for their occurrence at all, these atrocities being in nearly every instance provoked by acts of injustice, aggression, or cruelty on the part of the lawless class of men who exist on the Indian frontier, and whose notions of an Indian's rights are of the most primitive description. The Government of the United States is also responsible for such excesses in not affording protection both to whites and Indians, and in punishing their mutual aggressions.



ESKIMO HUT IN WINTER.

In the British possessions on the Pacific, though inhabited by many thousands of wild Indians, and without a single soldier in the country, we have never had anything like an Indian war;

the few outrages which have occurred being merely such as might have happened were an equal number of whites living there. Cross the boundary line, and in the United States the contrary is the case. It is nowhere safe to travel, and notwithstanding forts and soldiers everywhere, the most murderous massacres of whites take place, and of Indians in return: these are of almost daily occurrence. The vigilance of the Hudson's Bay Company, on the one hand, in preventing such outrages by a firm yet just treatment of the Indians, and on the other, of the Imperial or Provincial Governments in punishing according to law any crime, has prevented us from being involved in an Indian war. There are men who would be only too glad to see such a war; but I am glad to think that the manly character of the majority of the people of these countries has discountenanced anything but a proper treatment of the aborigines over whom we have been called to preside, though the very general ignorance of their character and history has in many cases excited indifference or a worse feeling towards



ESKIMO CATCHING AUKS (AFTER KANE).

them. In the United States, on the contrary, though the government has theoretically provided most munificently for the aboriginal races, recognising their right to a very footbreadth of their land (which the English have never done), yet the infamous peculations of the agents of the Indian department, the indifference of the government to punish the most lawless aggressions committed by the civilians and the military upon the Indians, and that loose notion of right and wrong towards savages which slavery has produced in the people, have caused the Indians to take the law into their own hands. I am willing to confess that many of the Indian outrages are merely for plunder; but at the same time many of these wars have been instigated by outrages and injustice, and are continued for revenge. The one-half of the atrocities committed never come to the ears of the more reasoning class of the people. We only hear the exaggerated account of the ruffians who perpetrated the villainies without hearing the provocations. I would not shock my readers by a repetition of some of these, though my note-books could afford ample proof of all that I have said.

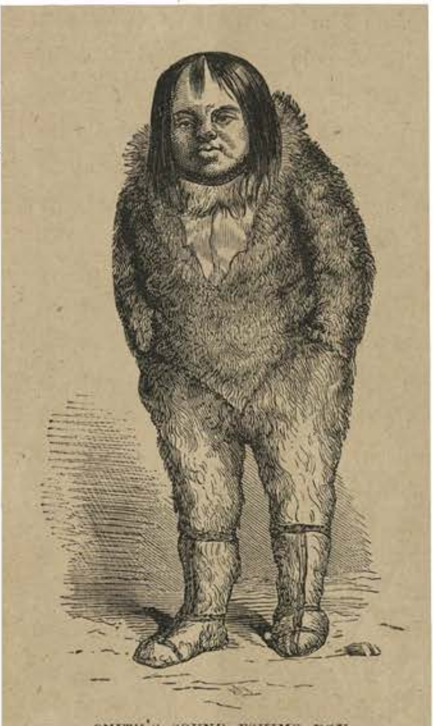
When the early fur-traders came into Oregon, some of the kindliest of all the native tribes were those comprehended under the general title of Shoshonees or Snakes. This nation is now, and has been for more than twelve years, at open war with the United States, daily committing the most frightful atrocities on the miners and travellers in Eastern Oregon and Idaho Territory. It is the last of the Indian races to the west of the Rocky Mountains, north of California, now habitually at war with the settlers, and there seems reason to believe that they will be exterminated. At one time there were hopes of peace, and I was present some years ago when a treaty was made with one of the bands; but they now seem determined to fight it out, and it is no uncommon thing to hear of parties fitted out against them, who indiscriminately slaughter men, women, and children, and even exult in the recital of their deeds. The Western Pacific newspapers are full of such particulars. The Plain tribes will never yield, and will blindly fight to such an extent that their extermination must virtually, sooner or later, be effected. Enough has been said to show that by this means alone, more than by any other, the Indian races decrease, though at a fearful loss of life, property, and treasure, and, I need not add, in the eyes of all right-thinking men conversant with the subject, of the prestige to the people and government of the United States. In the British possessions on the Pacific this cause has, I am glad to think, owing to the peaceable relations existing between the two races, operated to a very small extent, and this good feeling is, as already mentioned, greatly owing to the Hudson's Bay Company, which governed, until recently, extensive territories without the aid of a single soldier.

In every respect, save taxation and the privileges and duties attending this, the Indians are treated as any other British subjects, and, if they commit wrong, are punished after trial as civilised men would be. Though it may be questioned whether we have any right to interfere with the Indians in their tribal relations, whether they appreciate trial by jury, or that sufficient is understood of their native customs and languages to judge them intelligently, yet, on the whole, it cannot be denied that the system has wrought as well as could be expected under the circumstances. The only cases in which we have been compelled to adopt extreme measures have been when the Indians have refused to surrender the offenders, and their villages have been bombarded and canoes destroyed: these have occurred several times. In one instance, the tribe lost several men, and became so powerless that most were carried into slavery; in another, a small tribe, called the Lamalchas (Vol. i., p. 114), was scattered and broken up. The collection of the Indians on Reserves has to a small extent prevented these outrages on peaceable tribes in the United States (and, in acknowledging this, nearly all that can be adduced in favour of the system has been said) ; but it is to be feared that as the colonies increase in population, the British Government may have more difficulty than has hitherto attended its efforts in protecting the native races, especially in such an Americanised province as British Columbia.

(5.) *Change of Dress.*—Since the advent of whites among the Indians they have, to a great extent, thrown aside their old dress, if (as among the Coast tribes) a blanket can be dignified as such, and adopted the garb of the whites. Phthisis, and other pulmonary complaints, at all times very common among the tribes living on the Coast, have increased tenfold, the people being now, owing to their dress, less able to resist cold than formerly, when, exposed to it without proper protection and sitting in their canoes for hours in wet clothing, their bare skin met the blast. The Swedish proverb is not far wrong when it says, that "dirt and grease are the poor man's clothing," and I am not altogether sure that the use of soap (a piece of civilisation by no means common with Indians) conduces much to hardihood if the body be insufficiently clothed. Cleanliness may be "next to godliness," but I question the salubrity of such godliness to an Indian in a wet canoe in a pouring rain, with a chilly wind following, and the poor fellow clad in a cotton shirt and ragged trousers. One thing is certain, that owing to this, and their constitution being debilitated by vices, consumption is much on the increase, is claiming more than its ratio of victims, and is contributing much to the decrease of the Indian race. When they do not fall victims to it themselves they transmit an enfeebled constitution to their children. Some of the tribes on the North-West are getting thinned by pulmonary consumption (phthisis), which only the free use of the oulachan oil (expressed from the fatty tissues of *Osmerus pacificus*) keeps in check.

(6.) *Mental Depression.*—The last primary cause of the decrease of the aboriginal races of America is one which will not receive such general acceptance as the foregoing, but it is a predisposing means of the decay of the North American Indian race, which no student of psychology would hesitate about admitting, viz., *mental depression rendering them less able to resist physical effects.* Casual observers, seeing the careless, light-hearted Indians, would be inclined to believe that their present state of decay is not felt by them, but those who know them better are justified in thinking differently. The feelings that, as an independent people, their years are numbered, and that for them "their day is o'er," prevail much among all classes of Indians. Those well acquainted with the depressing effect of such thoughts on the power of throwing off disease or physical decay, must allow that insensibly it is shortening the days of the race: there is no maudlin sentimentality in this, but stern reality. Those who remember the general Indian war of 1855-6, when it was resolved at one blow to exterminate the white race (with the exception of the Hudson's Bay Company's *employés*) out of Oregon, when Lechi and Neilson (Vol. i., p. 111) passed through the tribes, inflaming them against the whites, and the long, hard struggle they made for their independence, will look upon it in a sterner light. But the thought of one day regaining their own is not lost to these unfortunate people. I have mentioned in a former volume that, in 1865, I saw at the Dalles of the Columbia an Indian—a dreamer of dreams—who tells that the day is coming when the Indians will again be the masters, and the whites their slaves; and, as he tells it to the frowsy denizens round the morning camp-fire, I daresay he finds willing ears, and this *château en Espagne* lightens the dull routine of savage existence (Vol. i., p. 170).

(7.) The above, in my opinion, form the primary elements of the decay of the Indian race. Among the secondary may be ranked (*a*) *occasional famine;* but this has, notwithstanding the hand-to-mouth nature of savage life, but little effect in decreasing their numbers out of due proportion, for it falls rarely upon tribes, but on individual families at a distance from home; or, owing to other causes not affecting the general body of the people. They have often, owing to improvidence, seasons of scarcity, but the Indians weather them without more serious results than a reduction in summer corpulence. (*b*) *Infanticide* is an excessively common crime among Indian women, and this, as well as the production of (*c*) *abortion*, is on the increase in the vicinity of white settlements, among the more dissolute women, in order to have greater facilities to pursue their immoral courses. It is resulting in greatly reducing Indian families. Civilisation has, I think, materially effected the ease with which all savage women effect delivery. A Hottentot or Bushman woman will drop behind the men travelling, effect her labour, and overtake them on the march. I do not recollect any similar case among the Indian squaws, but parturition is effected with great ease, and, among the Eskimo, I have known a woman to be delivered of a child in the morning, and by evening to be on the beach with the naked babe in the hood of her *kapetah*, dressing a seal-skin! From facts which I possess it appears that it is the size of the head of the savage and civilised child at birth which causes the relative ease or difficulty in labour, the former being smaller than the latter, though in a few years the disproportion is much less. I was informed* of a case in which the first white child was born in a certain portion of the Hudson's Bay Company's territories, where the Indians flocked from far and near, not to see the *white child*, but the *big-headed child*, though, in this respect, it was not out of proportion to the rest of its body.



SMITH'S SOUND ESKIMO BOY (AFTER KANE).

Accidents of the chase, fisheries, canoes, and ordinary diseases, are not out of undue proportion to the births; so that I have not noted these as causes of extraordinary mortality. However, owing to the Indians' constitutions being weakened by the "vices of civilisation," or by mental depression, disease has now greater play upon such as have been *unfortunate* enough to come under the ban of that fatal semi-civilisation which I have alluded to.

Crossing the breadth of the American continent we meet the Eskimo (Vol. i., p. 5), a race, however, extending from Behring's Straits to Greenland, and in many respects closely approximating the fish-eating tribes of the coast of North-West America; and who furnish an abundant illustration of the truth of the reasons which I have assigned as the causes of the rapid decay of savage races. Everywhere through the wide Arctic Archipelago do we find numerous traces showing that the Eskimo must have been at one time a very powerful race; but we must not be misled by finding remains of old villages, and concluding that these are the houses of a people now extinct, for the Eskimo is essentially a nomadic race, moving about from hunting-ground to hunting-ground, and when game becomes scarce in one place migrating to another and often very distant locality. In West Greenland the Eskimo may be divided into two great sections, separated by the glaciers and ice-floes of Melville Bay. Those lying north of that barrier have been fancifully called the "Arctic Highlanders," and differ essentially not only in habits but in physical condition from those lying south of them in the comparative civilisation of the Danish settlements on the west coast of Greenland, from Tessuissak in latitude 73°, north to Pamiedluk, near Cape Farewell. The Arctic Highlanders are savages in the rudest state of existence, little contaminated by the vices of the whites, for the few explorers, or whalers, who have visited them, though they scarcely did their morality much benefit, could have introduced few of the vices of civilisation among that primitive race. Yet, strange to say, these people are dying off, and that rapidly, since they were first visited by Sir John Ross in 1818. The different tribes of Eskimo are not at war with each other; murders are

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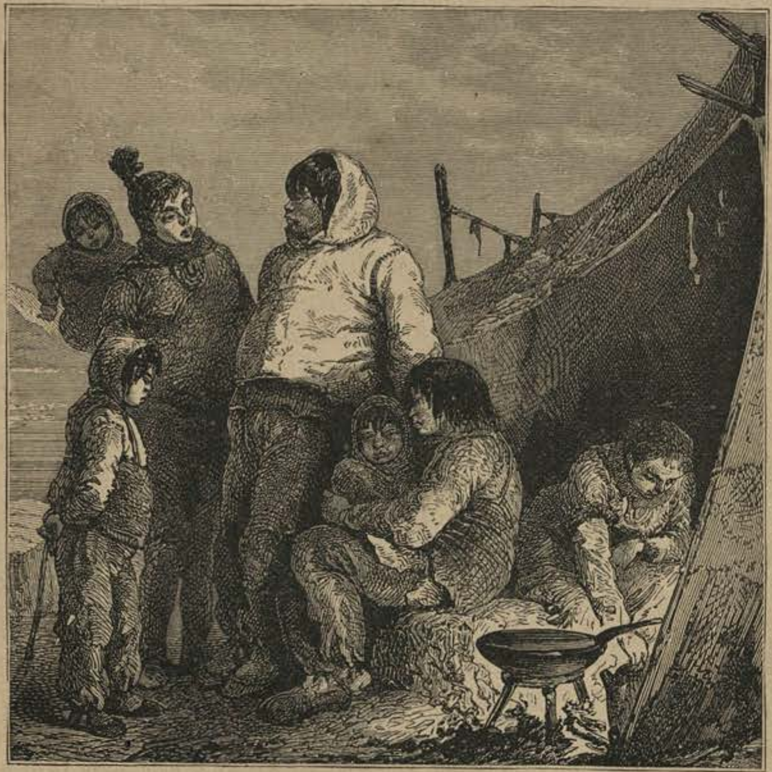
* By the late celebrated physician, Sir Jas. Y. Simpson.



ESKIMO SUMMER TENT.

rare; the whites have exercised no influence in decreasing their numbers; spirits are unknown; and the only reason I can assign is, starvation, attendant upon unsuccessful years, the death of the all-necessary dogs by a disease similar to hydrophobia, which, during the last few years, has prevailed through the length of the Greenland coast,* and by epidemics among the people. In 1830 some whalers landed at Cape York, and found the huts all silent. Inside lay the people dead, the dogs beside their masters, with their hunting implements all around. Since Dr. Kane's visit there has been a great decrease, and old men are now counting on their fingers, like the Hydah boy (p. 202), when their race will have passed away from among the peoples of the earth. Everywhere is the cry, "We have only a few more suns to live; by-and-by we shall be all gone." And the message which these hyperboreans sent to the world of light, and missions, and civilisation, is fraught with a deeper meaning than even the plaintive words express: "Come back soon, or there will be nobody to welcome you" (Vol. i., p. 20). South of Melville Bay the western shores of Greenland have been settled continuously by the Danes in different places—from 1720 up to the present date—and the population is not all pure Eskimo, but greatly mixed with Danish blood. At the date of Hans Egede's landing in 1720 the population, so far as known, was calculated at 20,000, but soon after, the effects of civilisation became marked. In 1731 small-pox was introduced from Europe, and 3,000 were cut off. The "black death" (apparently a form of rheumatic fever) and other epidemics followed, immensely reducing the population. The trade of Greenland being a strict monopoly conducted under the direction of the government, the evils of a commercial competition have not been experienced by the natives; war of any sort is unknown; and drunkenness and disreputable diseases are equally so, great care being exercised to prevent the introduction of the latter fatal epidemics. Within the last half century (with an exception to be presently mentioned) there has been no extraordinary decrease by epidemics; and, accordingly we find, that instead of falling off, the population of Greenland has until lately been actually on the increase, as is shown by the regular census kept by the Danish traders and missionaries; and the same will be found true where equal care is taken to prevent the evils of civilised vice from depopulating the aborigines of any country, as has been so creditably done by the Government of Denmark.† These statistics of the population of Danish Greenland are so important in reference not only to the question of the decrease of the savage race, but to that of the supposed decay of a hybrid people, that I will give them in full:—

In 1820	the total	population was	6,286
1824	”	”	6,331
1830	”	”	6,997
1835	”	”	7,356
1840	”	”	7,877
1845	”	”	8,501
1850	”	”	9,185
1855	”	”	9,644
1863	”	”	9,491

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* See my "Mammals of Greenland" (*Proceedings of the Zoological Society*, 1868), and Fleming in *The Geographical Magazine*, February, 1875.

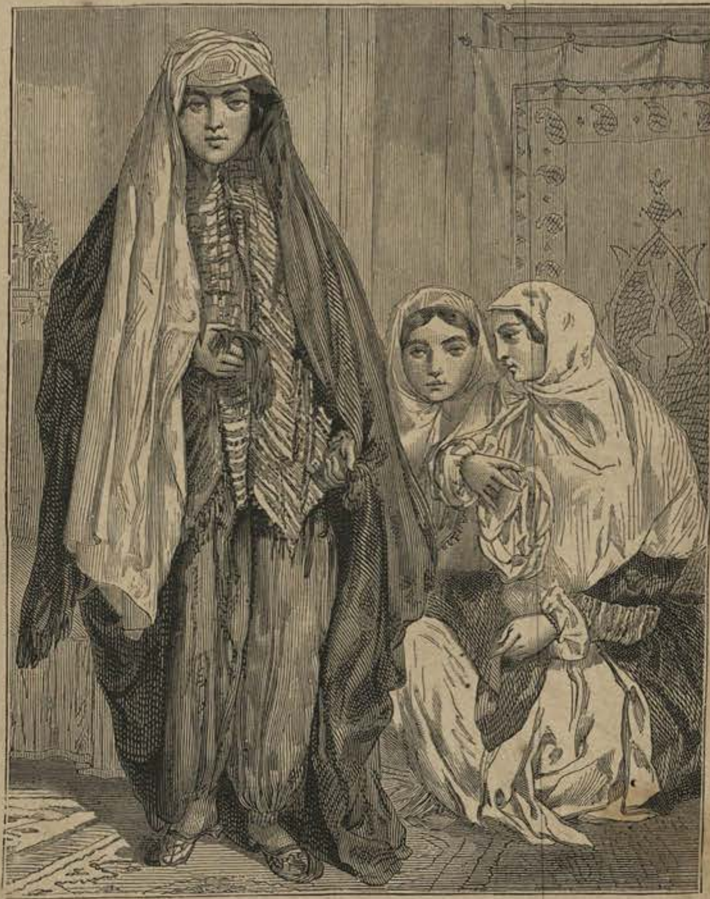
† The native population of the Sandwich Islands is on the decrease, through vice introduced by the whites.

Of these 1,327 were married males, 3,081 unmarried males, and 183 widowers; 1,371 married females, 3,166 unmarried females, and 516 widows. Twenty-one males had attained the age of from sixty-six to seventy, and thirty-nine females are recorded of the same age; eight individuals were aged from seventy-six to eighty, and one woman had reached the very mature age of ninety. In October, 1855, there were 248 Europeans in Greenland. In an analysis of the causes of 4,770 deaths now before me, I find that 415 were lost in their kayaks, 622 died of coughs and influenza, nineteen fell from cliffs, fifty-nine were drowned in various ways, 230 died of pulmonary consumption, and so on.

From the above statistics it appears that, with the exception of a slight decrease shown in the census of 1863, the Eskimo in Greenland were absolutely increasing, by the absence of the causes which have caused the decay of the wild races, though, by the presence of these causes in former times, until the rule of the Danes stopped this, they had decreased rapidly. In 1867 an extraordinary epidemic of pneumonia (apparently) cut off, it is believed, about five per cent. of the population. They have not yet recovered this check to their increase.

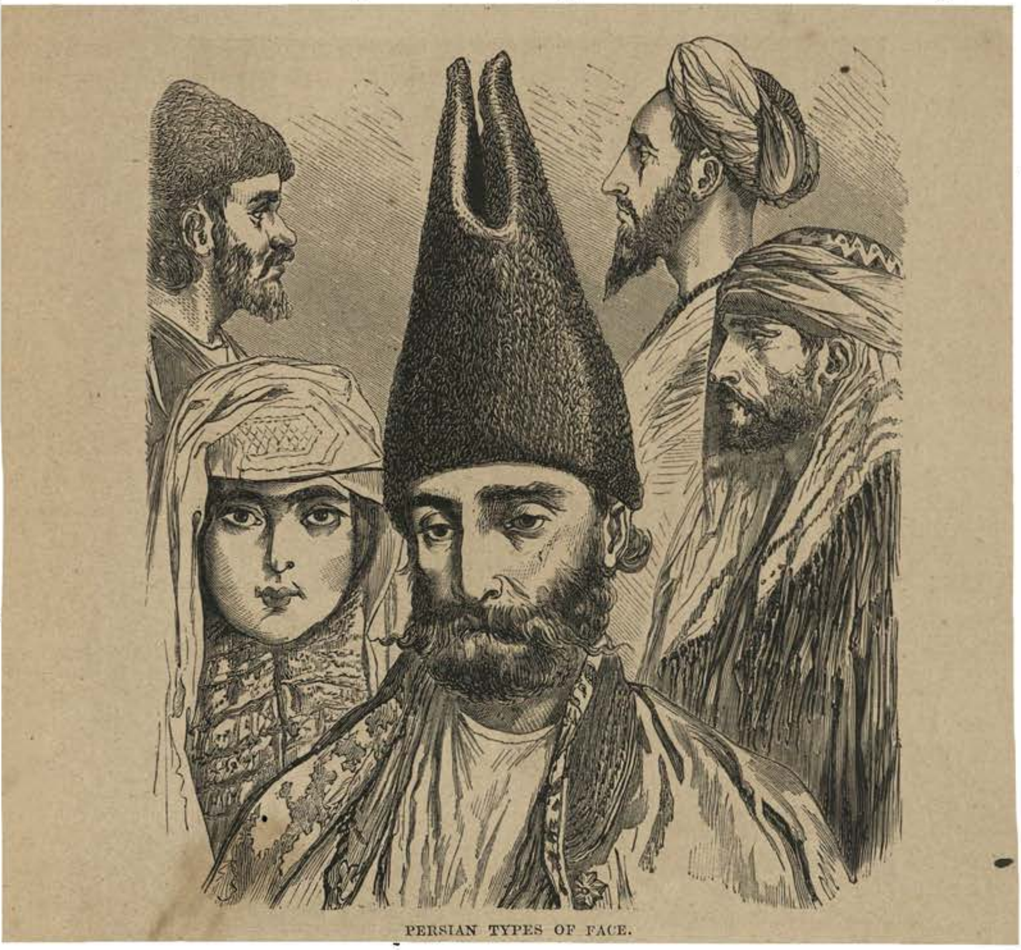
Though the Eskimo of Danish Greenland are totally changed in their customs and religion (being nominally Lutherans), yet civilisation has not, to any great extent, altered their ways of physical existence. They still hunt the seal and the whale, and live in filthy huts, their persons innocent of soap and water. They use a great proportion of Danish food, and sugar and coffee are now necessaries of life to them; but they have used these so long that I was not able to learn whether, as with the savage races of the North-West, these acted prejudicially to their health, and their comforts have been otherwise so materially improved by contact with the Danes, that I do not think that these customs of civilisation have been deleterious. The Danes prohibit the sale of spirits to them, and it is only on very high occasions that they taste "schnapps," but when they do obtain this in quantities (as will occasionally happen on board whalers, &c.), they consume it without stint, and one or two "drunks" are sufficient to break down, if not kill an Eskimo. Indeed, these people are much affected by excitement of any sort, and the wild Eskimo of Pond's Bay, on the other side of Davis Straits, are long before they recover from the excitement induced by the whalers' visit in August. By the frequent visits of whalers, and their attendant evils, to Pond's Bay and the vicinity, the wild Eskimo in that quarter, once so numerous, are now reduced to a mere handful. Though the Danish Eskimo have adopted many of the odds and ends of a civilised wardrobe, yet they still adhere, in all the substantialities of their dress, to the universal Eskimo garb, the European articles being merely superadditions. On the whole, the contact of the Danes and the Eskimo in Greenland presents the most favourable instances with which we are acquainted of savagedom and civilisation treading on each other's heels; but from the peculiar circumstances under which it occurs, under a form of government established primarily for the amelioration of the native race, we can never expect to see other parts of the world under a similarly pleasant aspect.

It thus appears that the effect of the collision of savage and civilised races tends to the destruction of the former, and that the exception of the Eskimo in Danish Greenland, within recent periods, is only due to the non-operation of the causes which have tended to the destruction of other barbarous races; for before the Government of Denmark exercised the strict control over the trade of the country, and the free contact of foreigners with the people, they had also begun to decrease in a very rapid manner. The only people who have been able to stand before the Caucasians have (with a few exceptions) been Negroes in a state of savagedom, the fertility of the race being so extraordinary as soon to repair any breaches in their tribes by war, vice, disease, or slavery, when not carried to an undue length. But even the Negroes, since they have been set free in the United States, are giving way to dissipation and vice, and are dying off rapidly, the mortality in some places being very great indeed. On the whole I have been long convinced, and, however opposed this opinion may be to the conviction and labours of many excellent and well-meaning philanthropical persons (for whom I entertain the greatest respect), I am compelled in justice to state it, that notwithstanding the good which may have been accomplished in individual cases, and in exceptional communities, the salutary effect of the introduction of civilisation among savage races has been more than counterbalanced by the evils. No doubt this is not due to the civilisation, but to the concomitants of that civilisation; but as the one will ever follow in the train of the other, we must view it as a whole; and if we look solely to the philanthropy of the subject, and the general happiness and prosperity of savage nations, we shall best consult their



PERSIAN WOMEN.

interests eventually by keeping away from them, and leaving them in that condition of human existence which they are best able to occupy; for where one is benefited and ameliorated by civilisation a thousand are ruined, morally, physically, and politically; resulting sooner or later in the utter extinction of their race, language, and traditions. We need not stop to inquire into the morality of all this, or whether mankind at large would be benefited or otherwise by the extinction of some races, or anent the rights of mankind involved. We, as men of science, are only concerned with the fact that these things are brought about, and their cause; but with the ethical side of the question we are, fortunately, not called upon to deal.



PERSIAN TYPES OF FACE.

CHAPTER XIII.

The Persian Group—Persians Proper.

Under this designation we may include various nationalities more or less known, some of them civilised nations, others barbarians, but none of them savages in the vulgar acceptance of the term. The area of the group is wide—Kurdistan, Persia, Affghanistan, Beluchistan, parts of Bokhara, the Kohistan of Cabul, and Kaffristan, and it comprises the Kurds, Persian, Beluchi, Affghans, and Paropamisans, as Latham calls them, after the mountain range of that name—in other words the populations of Kaffristan and the Kohistan of Cabul. All of these races have more a Caucasian than a Mongol caste of countenance; that is, they more resemble the fair-haired Europeans, the higher races of India, the Georgians, Circassians, and the inhabitants of the Caucasian range generally, than the Chinese, Thibetans, and Tartars. They inhabit for the most part a high table land. They are of one of the three great Mohammedan families of the world—the Turks and the Arabs being the other two. It is only in Kaffristan—the land of the Kaffirs or "infidels"—that any other than Parsee or Mohammedan, modified or mixed, exists. With this introductory note we will now visit in succession the chief races comprised under the Persian group, saying something about each in as near a proportion to their importance as possible.

CHARACTER AND CUSTOMS.

The present Persians are no more descended from those famous Medes and Persians whose laws were unchangeable, or from the race who defeated Xenophon and his ten thousand, nor the reigning Shah from Cyrus and Darius, than the present inhabitants of this country are from the men who met Julius Cæsar on the Kentish shore, or Queen Victoria from Caractacus and Boadicea. Persia has been so often invaded, and so many races have contributed to the empire, that it is now difficult, if not impossible, to trace the original elements which went to make up the whole. Rivers flow into the sea; you may trace their currents for a little way, but soon they blend with the ocean. Their elements are there, but it requires the analysis of the chemist to detect them. So is it with Persia and all of these ancient empires. There has been a blending together of numerous nationalities; yet the philologist and ethnologist may now and then detect them in certain eddies of the empire, where they have kept more unmixed than elsewhere, by a turn of speech, or a cast of countenance. First came the Turkish hordes in the seventh century; and since then, family by family, or nation after nation, came from the deserts beyond the Oxus, and from the banks of the Volga. The Parthians were said to be of Scythian origin; then came the dynasties of Saruan, Ghizni, and Seljuk—all three descended from the Turkomans. Next came the Mongols under Genghis Khan, the Turks under Timour, and, last of all, the Uzbecks. In addition various tribes have settled themselves on the borders of the kingdom, and here and there pressed into it, forming some of the finest military clans.

In no province of the country is the population wholly Persian—everywhere there are alien elements entering into or incorporated within it.*

The ancient Persians were celebrated for their handsome persons, tall stature, and the beauty of their women. The modern race—or "Tadjiks," as they call themselves—have a fair share of good looks; their features are regular, their countenance oval, hair glossy and luxuriant, and their eyes dark and soft. Witty, cheerful, frivolous, idle, vicious, luxurious, and fond of dress and display, is the character which has been given them. Let us consider how far this rather sweeping opinion has a sound basis on fact.

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* See Markham's "History of Persia;" Khanikoff's "Ethnographie de la Perse."

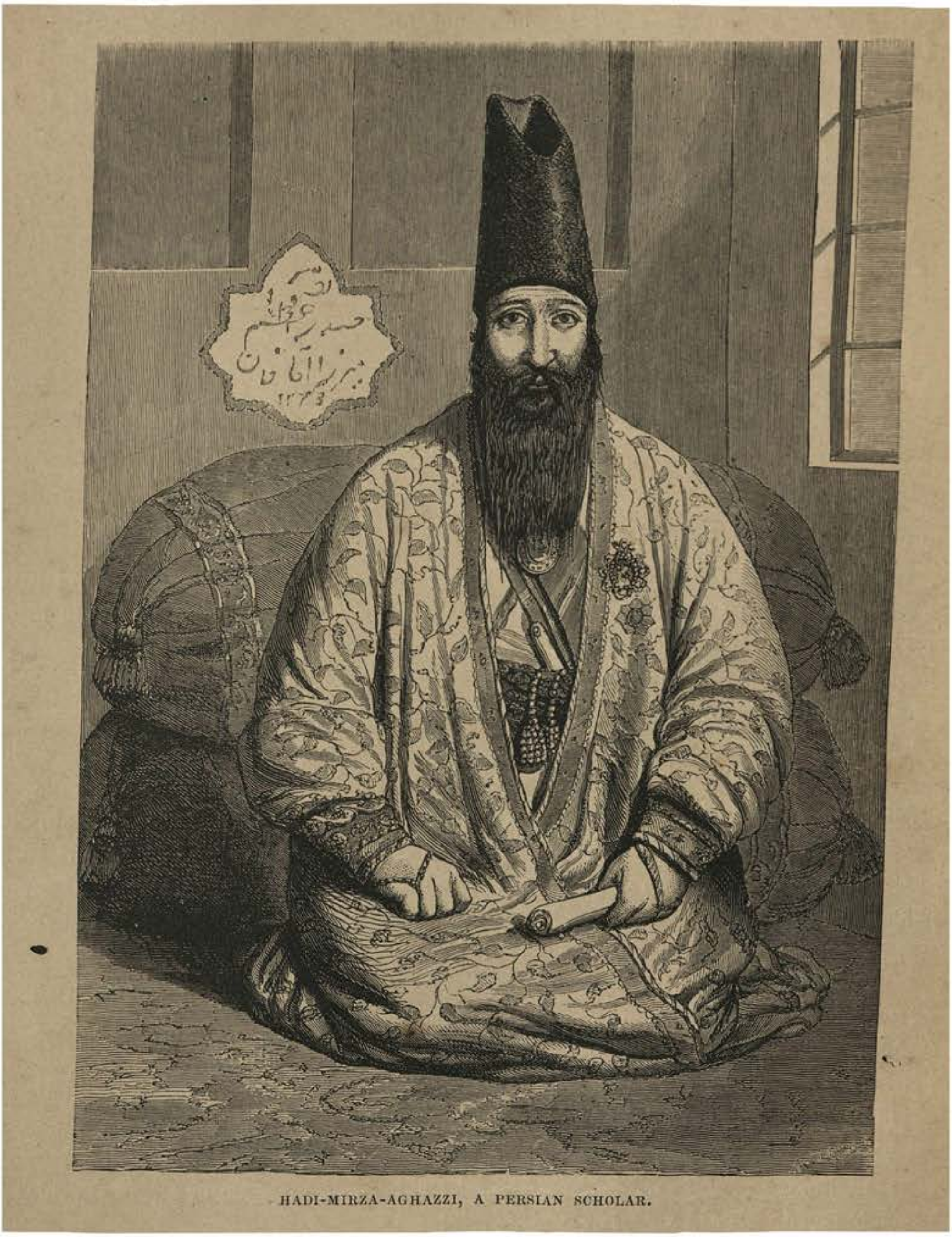
A people made up of such diverse elements is difficult to characterise without making so many exceptions, that the rule is *not* proved except to have no existence. However, in progress of time, notwithstanding the original differences of the people, some few general characteristics will be found to have become common to the people, and these we may briefly sketch. There are two great classes—the fixed and the wandering; but the erratic tribes have little voice in the country, and it is from the fixed inhabitants of the cities and country seats that the ruling classes and those who properly constitute the stronghold of the country are selected. We may, for convenience sake, divide them into (1) the civil and military functionaries, including those connected with the court; (2) the inhabitants of the towns, such as the merchants, shopkeepers, artisans, members of the religious orders, men of learning, and of all kinds of business; (3) the agriculturists or cultivators of the soil; and, lastly (4) there may be added the wild tribes.

The Persian court is like all other Eastern courts—a type of despotism. Every officer in it owes his elevation to the favour or caprice of the monarch, and is liable at any moment, without a chance of appeal either to his superiors, to a court of law, or to that greater public opinion which controls and checks petty tyranny and injustice in other countries. Treated in a haughty capricious manner by his sovereign, he, in his turn, rides roughshod over all his inferiors. Knowing that he may as suddenly fall by the caprice of the man who has raised him into power as he was elevated, he endeavours during his uncertain tenure of office to amass by every means which is known in a country where justice and right are strangers to those in office, wealth to support the extravagance which his position necessarily entails, to bribe his enemies when his evil day arrives, or to retire upon, if he be fortunate enough to escape the bowstring in the hour of his calamity.

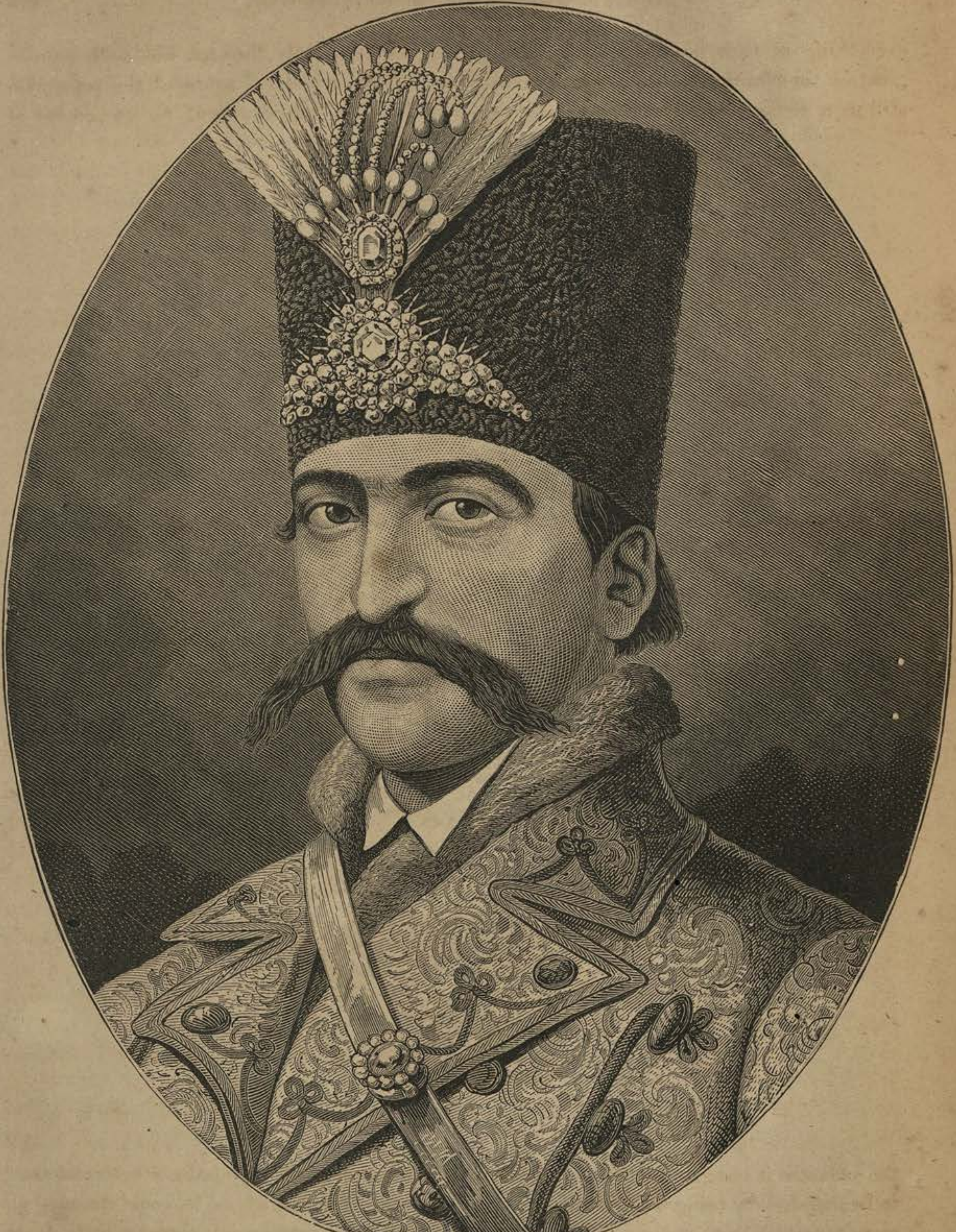
Deceitful, treacherous, venal, arrogant, dishonest, and overbearing, the Persian courtier possesses the art of concealing his true character under a polished manner, and a lively, courteous, and mild countenance, which rarely allow themselves to betray the workings of the mind. Added to this, he is often an acute diplomatist, and though a stranger to almost any virtue, is well informed, and skilful in business. A court so constituted cannot but be hated by all the poorer classes, who are the chief sufferers by it, and its pernicious example spreads the contagion of venality, petty rascality, and all the other evils attaching to it throughout the whole community. It is a mistake to suppose that all the high officers of state are selected from the class of nobles. No doubt, as in all countries, the "ruling classes" have more than their fair share of power and place; yet many of the public functionaries and ministers belong to the order of Mirzas, secretaries, or "men of business," it being the policy of the Persian monarchs always to select some of their officers from the humblest class of life, under the idea that men thus raised to dignity by the favour of the king alone, will be, through gratitude, more attached to his person than a military noble, whose rank would, as much as his sovereign's favour, have obtained for him power, and who, at the beck of ambition or offended pride, would be apt to summon to his aid a host of warlike retainers.

These Mirzas, though the equal of the nobles in treachery and immorality, are yet in general more accomplished than they; being well versed in all state-craft, mild and subdued in their address, and differing from the nobles in not indulging in martial or athletic exercises, and wearing, instead of a sword or dagger, a *culumdaun*, or ink horn, attached to their girdle.

Any person can get access to the king to lay his complaint before him; but, unless there be a desire to push the affair, the complaint only is heard. However, it is treasured up to be brought forth in due time when the functionary gets into disgrace, and an excuse is desired for his degradation. The office of collector of the public revenue is a poor one. The people, knowing that the taxation only goes to enrich the court and pays for no work of public utility, are unwilling to pay the just demands of the collector, and frequently even threaten to take his life. On the other hand, the rapacious officials at the capital do

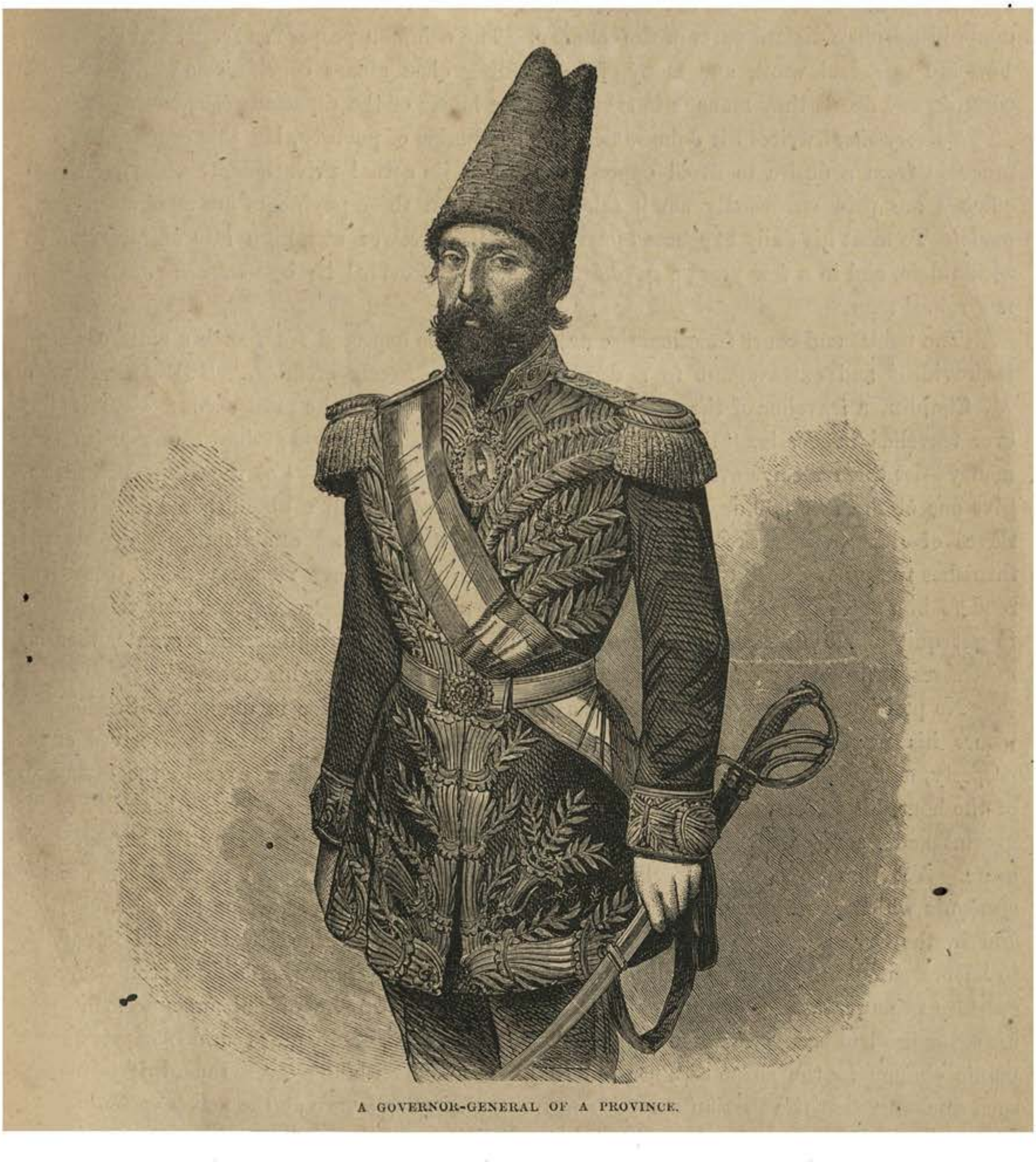


HADI-MIRZA-AGHAZZI, A PERSIAN SCHOLAR.



NASR-ED-DIN, SHAH OF PERSIA.

everything in their power to extort more taxes, and frequently threaten him with punishment on the plea that he has withheld taxes, so as to induce him to "squeeze" the population still more thoroughly. Dangerous though the office is, it is eagerly sought for on account of the influence it brings; and though the Prince of Shiraz did in irony order a notorious thief to be punished by being made manager of the revenue of a district, as he could conceive no crime for which that appointment would not be an adequate punishment, there is little doubt that between the people and the public treasury not a little of the public cash clings to the fingers of the collector, and that many of them accumulate great wealth.



A GOVERNOR-GENERAL OF A PROVINCE.

Notwithstanding the power of the nobles, the people, either through naturally high spirit, not effaced by long oppression, or more probably owing to long custom which allows them to do so with impunity, loudly proclaim their wrongs at court, if they consider themselves injured; yet, on account of the difficulty and expense of travelling, this is denied to the residents in the more distant parts of the country. The common people are frugal and industrious. Few are in actual want, and many of the trading class amass considerable wealth, which by cunning and deceit they manage to save from the hands of the rapacious courtiers.

"Every one," writes Sir John Malcolm, "complains of poverty, but this complaint as often proceeds from a desire to avoid oppression as from its actual privations."* The government officials are paid wretchedly small salaries, and even these payments are most unpunctually made. To meet his daily expenses money has to be borrowed at a high rate of interest, debts accumulate, and in a few years a government servant, provided he be—*mirabile dictu*—honest, is a ruined man.

The nobles and court functionaries are, as might be expected from such a state of things, improvident and extravagant to a degree which is scarcely credible. "They are," writes M. Chardin, a traveller of the seventeenth century, but one of the most shrewd observers that ever travelled in Persia, "the greatest spendthrifts in the world; they cannot keep their money—let them receive ever so much, it is immediately spent. Let the king, for instance, give one of them 50,000 or 100,000 livres, in fifteen days it will all be disposed of. He buys slaves of either sex, seeks out for mistresses, sets up a grand establishment, dresses and furnishes sumptuously, and expends at a rate which, unless other means present themselves, renders him speedily penniless. In less than two months we see our gentleman commencing to get quit of all his finery; his horses go first, then his supernumerary servants, then his mistresses, then, one by one, his slaves, and, finally, piece by piece, his clothes."

No position can be more ignominious than that of a courtier in disgrace. Suddenly he incurs his master's displeasure, and without the slightest warning he is deprived of his property, offices, dignities, and honours. His slaves are sold or handed over to the favourites of the hour, his wives and children are insulted or even handed over to the brutality of his grooms and guards, while he himself is beaten with a stick or mutilated by the executioner's knife. Yet these reverses of fortune are not final. They are looked upon as some of the accidents which must always happen to one who embraces the precarious life of a courtier, and by the Oriental, who considers every misfortune as pre-ordained by fate, and impossible to be prevented, are viewed in a light not widely different from what a European secretary of state (*Kammerherr*) or chamberlain would the royal frown, an official announcement that his sovereign had been pleased to dispense with his services, or an unfavourable expression of public opinion in the shape of a severe newspaper article on his policy. Indeed, it is in just such a manner that the Persian sovereigns express their displeasure at the policy or conduct of a minister. He may, after experiencing the felicity of being left "out in the cold," be received again into royal favour. "His family," writes Fraser, on whose work on Persia we have mainly relied, "is sent back to him, with such of his slaves as can be recovered; and his property, pruned of all dangerous exuberance, is returned. A bath mollifies his bruised feet, a cap conceals his cropped ears, a *khelut* covers the multitude of sins and stains, and proves a sovereign remedy for all misfortunes; and the whitewashed culprit is often reinstated in the very government he has lost, perhaps carrying with him a sentence of disgrace to his successor, to whose intrigues he owed his temporary fall. It is indeed surprising how improvidently the king and his ministers bestow situations of confidence on strangers or on men who, from having been the objects of such injustice as we have described, might be dreaded as their bitterest enemies; yet the management of a conquered state is frequently intrusted to the khan or prince who before possessed it in his own right. The pardoned rebel of one province is appointed to the supreme command in another; and the disgraced noble or governor is sent to take charge of a district where the utmost fidelity and zeal are required." No official can be sure of his life: it lies in the hands of the king as much as does the life of the meanest of his subjects. The death of an official is determined, the warrant for his execution is made out, and an officer is dispatched to execute it. The man rides as fast as horses pressed into his service can carry him until he arrives at the city where the doomed man lives. He exhibits his mandate to the governor or chief man of the city, and commands him to assist him. As soon as the door of the victim's house is opened, the executioner rushes in, and, drawing his scimitar, falls on the unfortunate man, with the exclamation, "It is the king's command," cuts him down, and strikes off his head. It is rarely that any resistance is offered. Cases have been known in which a powerful man has attempted to waylay the messenger on the road, when he knew his errand, and, depriving him of the warrant, his delayed his fate until another could be got, or until he has had time to make interest for his pardon; usually, however, such is the awe of the king's name that no attempt is made by the victim to escape his fate. He calmly submits to it: it is the decree of Allah—it is fate—Allah be praised! As for his nearest relatives, they fly from him as from a thing accursed. The dependents whom an hour ago he would have made happy with a smile desert him as one whose touch would defile. He is like an infected creature. "All nature seemed to be roused against him," are the words of an ancient writer in Persia. The Gholams are the king's guards, and are composed of young men held in favour by him. Generally they are young Circassian or Georgian captives, and accordingly their condition is that of slaves, though the position, being one of honour and emoluments, the sons of the highest noblemen in the country may be found enrolled in the Gholam Corps. It numbers 3,000 or 4,000 men, and, in addition to acting as escorts to the king and guards to his palaces, they are often dispatched on delicate missions, such as that we have described in relation to the execution of a disgraced official. In the execution of these errands they often amass large sums by extortion; and the surest proof of the invidious character which they bear is the fact that their very name carries terror. "The arrival of a *gholam e shahee* is enough to throw a whole district into alarm: it has even depopulated a village for a time."

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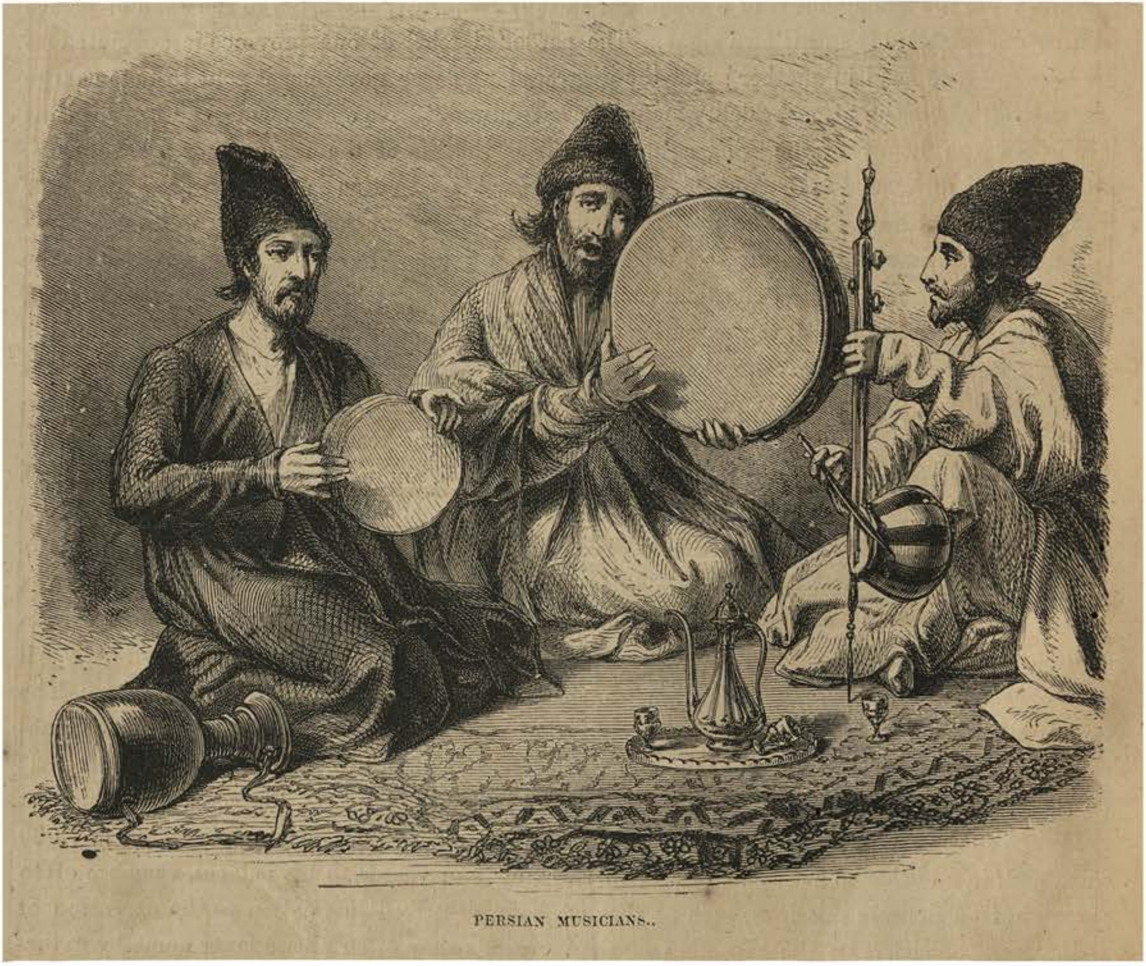
* "History of Persia," vol. ii., p. 494.

The inhabitants of different districts of Persia differ, as we have already mentioned, very considerably in character, and in their reputation for courage or cowardice. The inhabitants of the towns, or *Sheherees*, are even more mixed than those of the country districts. In general, though by no means to be held up as models for young men, they are of a better character than the higher classes, and are, as a rule, industrious, polite, sociable, good servants, and indulgent masters, though largely imbued with the deceit, falsehood, greed, and yet, in most cases, extravagance also of the nation. The merchants are often wealthy, and in general are intelligent and cultivated. The shopkeepers are more distinguished for insincerity and cunning—both vices, though inherent in the race, being fostered by their constant dread of the caprice of their superiors. The merchants, on the other hand, are, as all through the East, held in more consideration, being looked upon not only as a source of revenue, but also as a useful medium for maintaining friendly relations with the foreign states.*

The ecclesiastical law is administered by a numerous body of priests of all grades, from the Sudder al Suddoor † down to the lowest of the mollahs. The mooshteheds are the highest orders of priests, and are the supreme pontiffs of the kingdom, who, subject to the approbation of the sovereign, nominate all the principal judges. They usually number three or four, and are elected by the voice of the people to these offices, from their acknowledged sanctity and piety. Their chief duty is to protect the people from the tyranny and oppression of the rulers.


PERSIAN MUSICIANS.

The Sheik al Islam, or ruler of the faith, ranks next to the mooshteheds. He is a salaried judge, his duty being to administer the written law. He is often a man of quite as great influence

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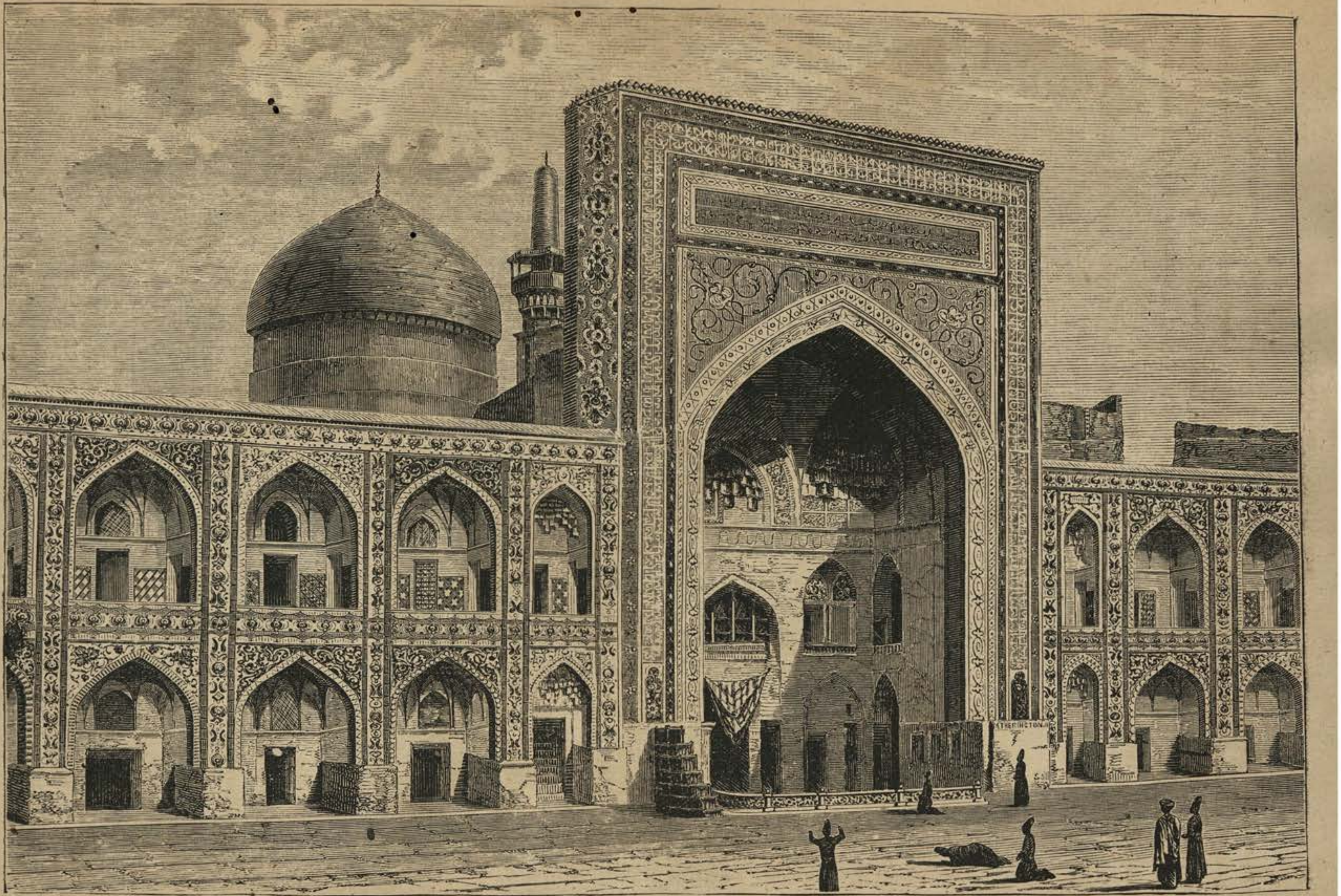
* Fraser's "Persia," p. 350.

† I cannot pretend to say that these names are spelled according to an approved orthography, an almost hopeless point to attain. Every writer differs on this subject.



VIEW OF THE MAUSOLEUM, IMAM ALI REZA, AND PART OF THE SAHN (OR GREAT SQUARE) AT MUSHED.

as the mooshteheds, his official superiors. The other ecclesiastical officials of consequence are those connected with the mosques. Every mosque, except the very insignificant ones, has a staff of three, viz., the mostwulla, who manages its temporal affairs, and who may be said to be a kind of churchwarden; the muezzin, or caller to prayers (the "beadle"); and the mollah, or priest proper, who conducts the ceremonial of the Mohammedan religion. "If the establishment is rich," Fraser remarks, "there are several of the last-mentioned order, from whom is selected a peish numaz, who recites the prayers and goes through the motions and genuflexions to guide the congregation. They also preach a sort of sermon on texts from the Koran—the Mohammedan sacred writings. Besides these, there are in every city, and connected with all seminaries of learning, a crowd of mollahs, who live by their arts, and have little of the priest but the name. They practise astrology, write letters and contracts for those who are ignorant of penmanship, and contrive by these means to prolong a miserable existence. Nothing can be lower than the character of these people. Their hypocrisy, profligacy, and want of principle, are the subjects of stories, epigrams, and proverbs without end. 'Take care,' says one adage, 'of the face of a woman and the heels of a mule; but with a mollah be on your guard at all points.' 'To hate like a mollah,' and 'to cheat like a mollah,' are sayings of frequency in the mouth of a Persian." It is not the mollahs alone who are the subject of Persian jocularity. All classes who are concerned in the administration of the law or Mohammedan religious ceremonies are proverbial for their dishonesty and trickery. And chief among these are the seyeds, or descendants of the prophet, who are accounted rogues by nature; but after they have made a pilgrimage to Mecca, to the birthplace of Mohammed, are considered to have graduated in all dishonesty and rascality. In the repertory of Persian jests, nine-tenths hinge upon what a mollah or a haji (Mecca-pilgrim) did, and the anecdotes are told with a grave humour peculiarly characteristic of the East.

The *cultivators of the soil,* though oppressed, are in comfortable circumstances, hospitable, active, and intelligent.

Persian women, like those of all other Mohammedan countries, are not looked upon as the equals of the men. They are by some Moslem priests even believed not to have souls, and in every case they are mere slaves who minister to the pleasure of their haughty lords. In many cases, however, their sharp wit enables them to gain an ascendancy over their more lethargic husbands, and even to sway the affairs of the court at their own sweet will.

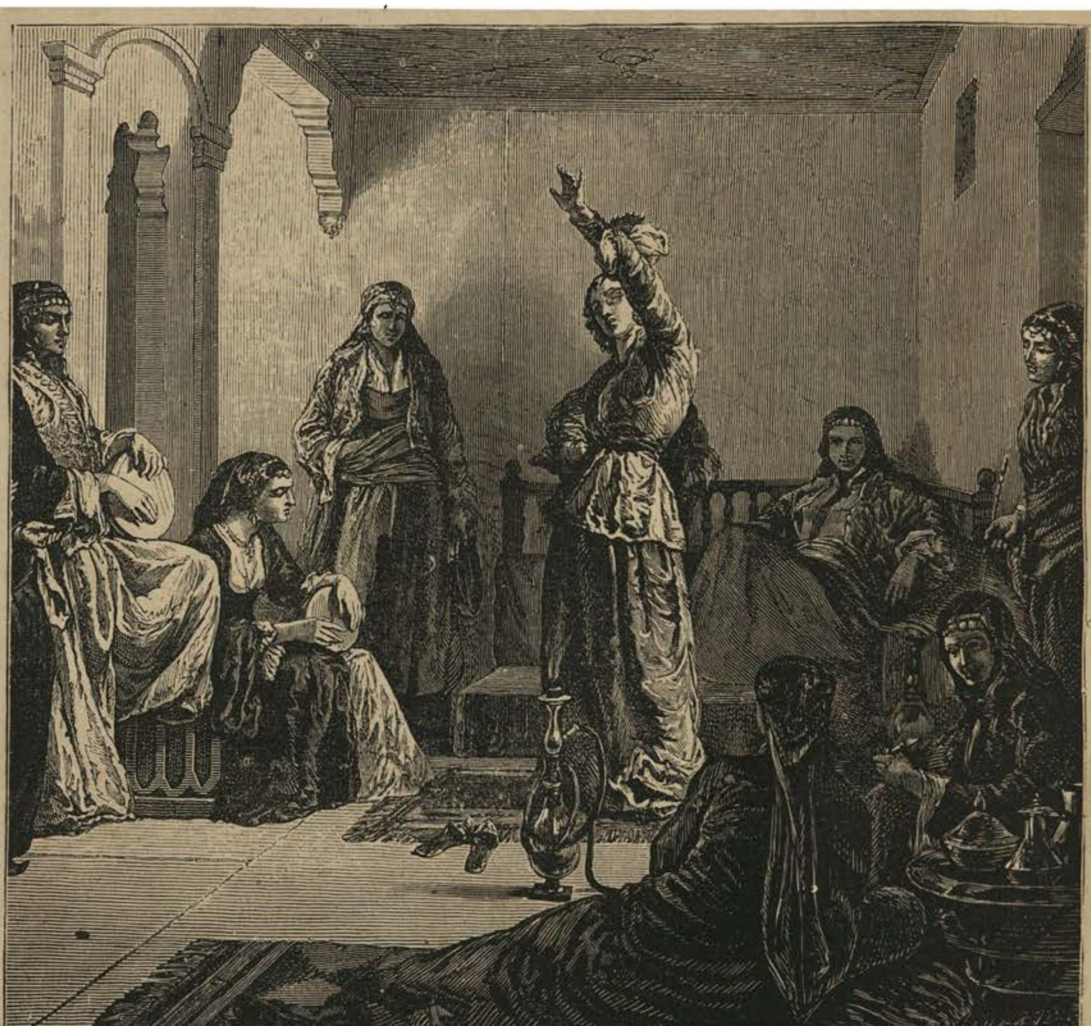
An Eastern seraglio is nevertheless a poor prison-house, tenanted by uneducated women, whose only thoughts are to please their master and gratify their sensual wishes. Intrigue, discontent, and crime are the natural sequence of such a state of matters. The harem life has been often described, but by none, it is said by those acquainted with the subject, in more faithful colours than by the French writer whom we have already quoted. He is describing what he has seen and heard in regard to the harem of the shah, or king. "The seraglio of the king," says M. Chardin, "is most commonly a perpetual prison, from whence scarce one female in six or seven has the good fortune to escape, for women who have become the mothers of living children are provided with a small establishment within the walls, and are never suffered to leave them. But privation of liberty is by no means the worst evil that exists in these melancholy abodes. Except to that wife who is so fortunate as to produce the firstborn son, to become a mother is the most dreaded event that can happen to the wretched favourites of the king. When this occurs, not only do the mothers see their last chance of liberty and marriage cut off from them, but they live in the dreadful anticipation of seeing their children deprived of life or sight when the death of their lord shall call a new tyrant, in the person of his son, the brother of their offspring, to the throne. Should they avoid the misfortune of having children, by an assiduous court paid to the king's mother, or to the mother of his eldest son, it sometimes happens that they obtain the good fortune of being bestowed upon some of the officers about the court; for the ministers and grandees, who are always intriguing with these influential ladies, seldom fail of soliciting a female of the royal harem either for themselves or their sons. Indeed, it is no uncommon thing for the king himself to bestow one of these fair captives upon his favourites, or his courtiers; and sometimes, when the harem gets crowded, this is done to a great extent, as a measure of economical expediency. Happy is she that is thus freed from her prison, for she at once exchanges the situation of a slave for that of a legitimate and influential wife, and the head of a domestic establishment, where she is ever treated with the attention due to one who has been the favourite of a king." A Persian lady can, however, except under the exceptional circumstances mentioned, go visiting whenever she pleases, and it is said that the custom is not conducive to high morality.

Crimes of the foulest character are perpetrated within the recesses of these harems. Revenge, cruelty, jealousy, intrigue, and infanticide do not exhaust the list of evil deeds to which these prison-houses—the offspring of Eastern exclusiveness and suspicion—are witnesses. These horrors lessen as the rank of the possessors of the harem decreases in greatness, until in the houses of the ordinary merchants and mechanics the number of wives is few, and something like domestic life is seen. In the case of the women of villagers and labourers the veil is entirely dispensed with, and they may be seen following their occupations like women of their class in Europe, or other parts of the world where the Mohammedan faith has not instilled the idea that the females of the nation are to be carefully watched and excluded from the gaze of all but their lords.

Most of the harem women are of Circassian, Georgian, or Armenian blood, and are often fair in complexion, well formed, and handsome, with large black languishing eyes, rich red lips, and even pearly teeth. Their natural charms are, however, often destroyed by the custom they have of painting their cheeks with various colours, by constantly smoking, which spoils their teeth, and by the habit of tattooing on their persons various fanciful figures. A fine head of hair is looked upon as indispensable to a harem beauty. If nature denies this adornment, it is supplied, either wholly or in part, by artificial means—a custom which (I am told) is not unknown in a certain "kingdom by the sea," of which Tehran is *not* the capital!

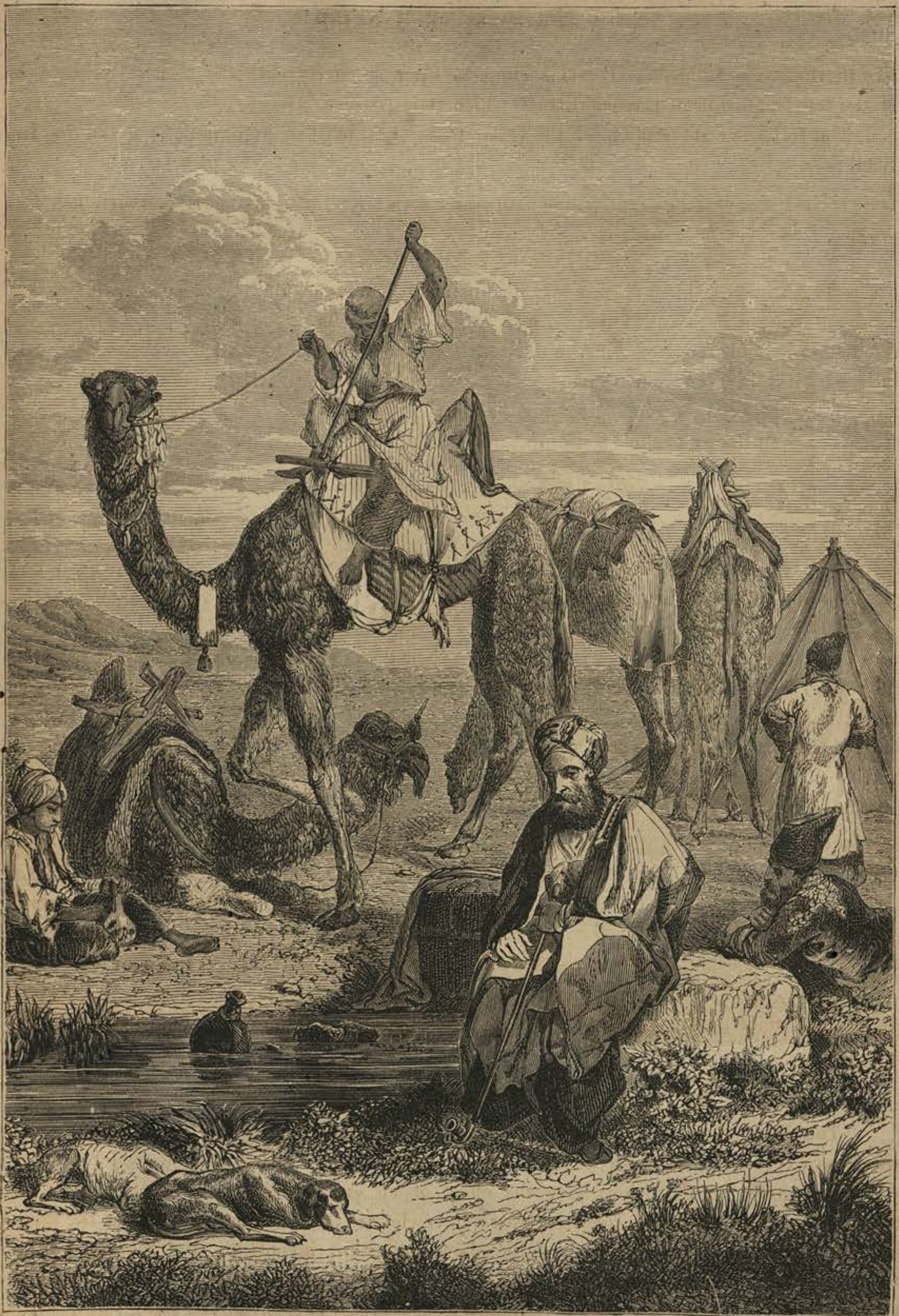
A shift and trousers of coloured silk or cotton constitute the dress worn within doors, supplemented, if the weather be cold, by a jacket, shawl, cloak, or furs. The head is enveloped in a silk handkerchief, so arranged as to form a turban (Figs. on pp. 185, 232). When the women go outside, they fold themselves in a wrapper of "blue checked stuff," which covers them from head to foot, only leaving a small laced opening for their eyes, but through which it is impossible for any one, even the lady's own husband, to detect the personality of the wearer. It is of something of the same nature as the *saya* of Spanish South America (Vol. ii., p. 7); and, like the Peruvian ladies, the Persians cling to their *incognita* with the keenest relish, as one of the few fragments of personal liberty which they possess.

The following description of the gala dress of a lady of high rank is given by Lady Sheil :—



INTERIOR OF A HAREM.

"The Shah's mother wore a pair of trousers made of gold brocade. These Persian trousers are always very wide, each leg being, when the means of the wearer allow it, wider than the skirt of a gown, so that they have the effect of an exceedingly ample petticoat; and, as crinolines are unknown, the *élégantes* wear ten or eleven pairs of trousers, one over the other, in order to make up for the want of the above important invention. But to return to the Shah's mother. Her trousers were edged with a border of pearls embroidered on braid; she had a thin blue *crèpe* chemisette, also trimmed with pearls. This chemisette hung down a little



HALT OF A DESERT TRIBE.

below the waist nearly meeting the top of the trousers, which are fastened by a running string.

"A small jacket of velvet was over the chemisette, reaching to the waist, but not made close in front, and on the head a small shawl, pinned under the chin. On the shawl were fastened strings of large pearls and diamond sprigs; her arms were covered with handsome bracelets, and her neck with a variety of costly necklaces. Her hair was in bands, and hung down under the shawl in a multitude of small plaits. She wore no shoes, her feet being covered with fine cashmere stockings. The palms of her hands and the tips of her fingers were dyed red with a herb called henna, and the edges of the inner part of the eyelids were coloured with antimony. All the Kajars have naturally large arched eyebrows, but, not satisfied with this, the women enlarge them by doubling their real size with great streaks of antimony. Her cheeks were well rouged, as is the invariable custom among Persian women of all classes. In fact, like their contemporaries in Europe, the Persian ladies

'With curious arts dim charms revive,
And triumph in the bloom of fifty-five.'"*

Ignorant, sensual, frivolous, with no intellectual resources to fall back upon, the hope of pleasing their master or husband, or of displacing from his favour a rival whom they hate—their only idea—the conversation of a harem party is wearisome in the extreme. All that delicacy which we associate with a woman is absent from their discourse: scandal and gossip are the only subjects of conversation, and on every topic they express themselves with the most disgusting grossness. A friendly *tête-à-tête* is every now and then broken up by a violent quarrel among the beauties, when invective and abuse, the indecency of which would bar their repetition, are said to flow from their Eastern tongues with a fluency which long practice and a freedom from anything like shamefacedness can only supply.

The *wandering tribes* (*or Eeliants*) *of Persia* belong to various races. They are either partially or wholly erratic. They live apart from themselves, and beyond supplying the principal military force of the country have never merged into the general body of the people. Bold, free, and warlike, they resemble in some respects their brethren of the great *steppes* of Central Asia, from which many of them have sprung. In their character they are rude, quarrelsome, uncertain in their loyalty, idle, and profligate, and though generous and hospitable, they exhibit a supreme contempt for the peaceful inhabitants of towns and farms. Their occupations are pastoral and predatory. Their language, or rude dialect, has been called the *kej-zuban*, or "barbarous tongue," but it varies greatly among the different tribes. Among the names of these erratic tribes may be mentioned the Lac, Feilee, Yamoots, Gocklans, Tuckehs, Louty, Baktyan (pp. 236, 252, 253), &c., each of which is divided into many sub-tribes, designated by the names of their supposed progenitors.

All are very poor and mean and frugal in their diet. The Turkomans and Kurds also lie on the borders of Persia, and even make inroads. They will, however, be afterwards described in their proper place.

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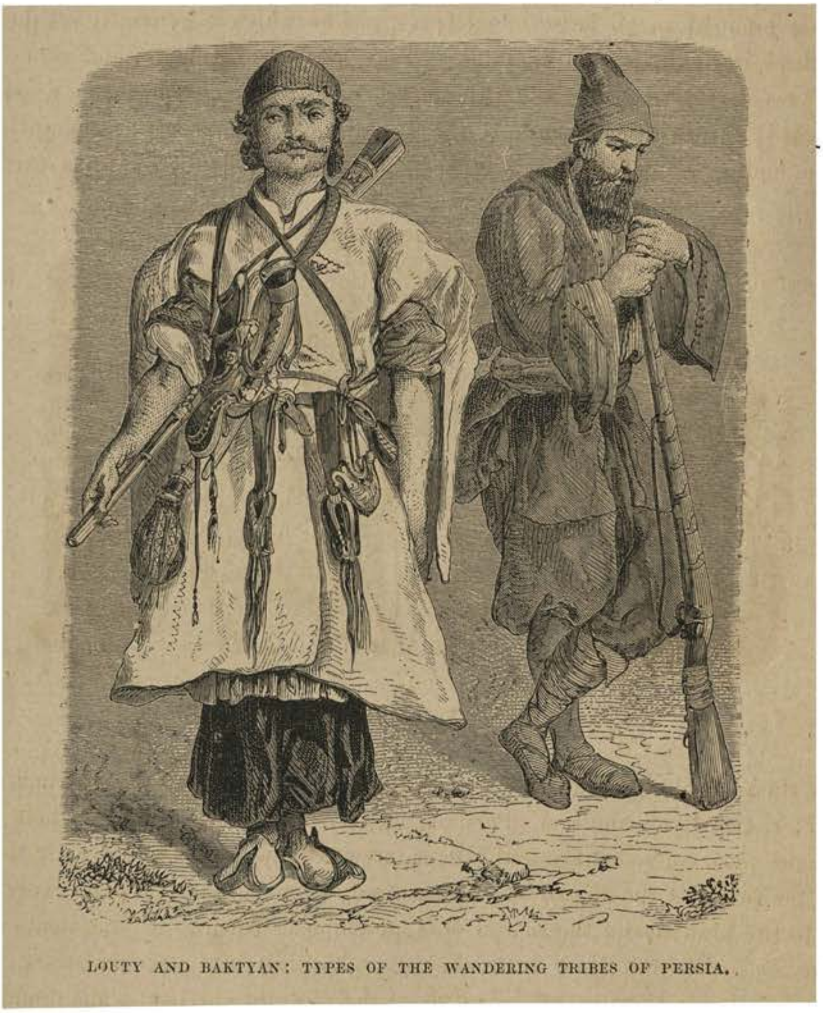
* "Glimpses of Life and Manners in Persia" (1856), Piggot: "Persia, Ancient and Modern," p. 28.

These predatory tribes, glorying in the very name of plunderers, are the curse of the peaceful inhabitants of the villages lying near the mountainous or desert tracts which they roam over or inhabit. Most of the young chiefs are educated at court, and constitute with their clans the military strength of the country: but, overbearing and passionate to excess, they are often a source of considerable trouble to the government. They scarcely observe even the external forms of religion, and despise the most binding laws of Mohammedanism in which they are supposed to believe. When one of them was reproved for eating a hare—an unclean beast forbidden to all true Musselmans—his reply was, "Not eat it! Do you think I have hazarded my life and half killed my horse and dog to be deterred from eating this hare by what some ass of a mollah has said? I would eat his father," he added laughing, and rode off with his prize. It is said in Persia that, horrible to relate—and the deed of darkness is spoken of under the breath—some of these tribes will even satisfy the cravings of their appetite with hogs' flesh! All of the tribes glory in being called plunderers, but are indignant if they are called thieves. The one takes what he wants by dint of his strength—the other takes it by stealth, conscious of his weakness. It is a distinction with a wide difference in the eyes of these nomadic hordes. A redeeming feature of their character is that among them the women enjoy great influence.

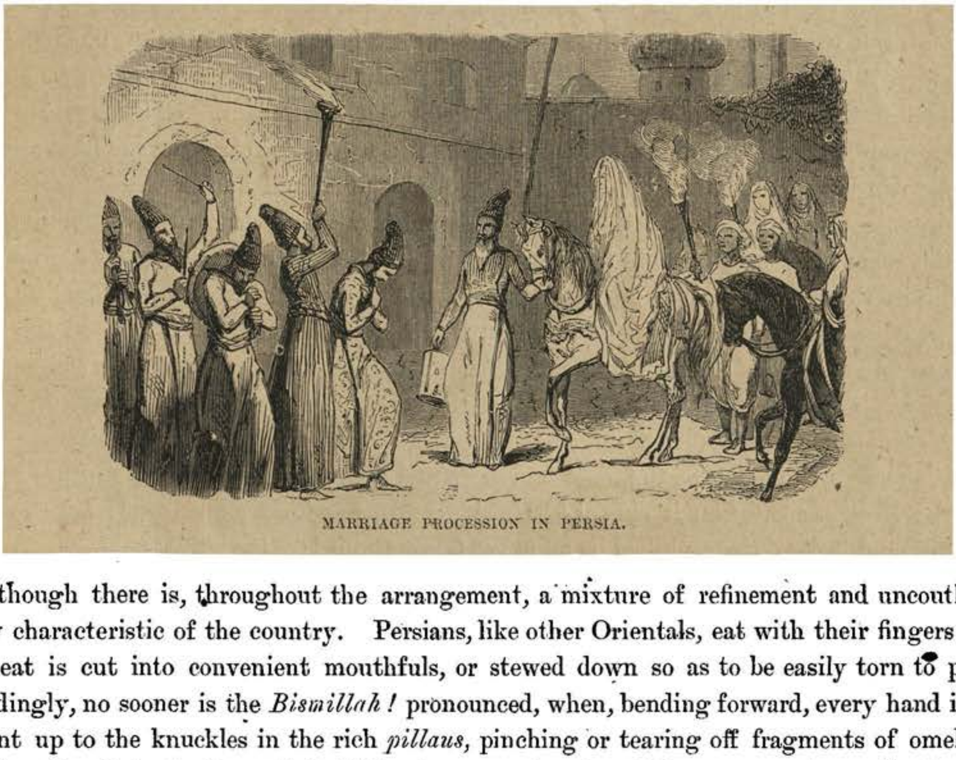
In the preceding pages we have briefly sketched the character of the Persians. On its dark side it shows them to be unprincipled, deceitful, corrupt, deficient in a sense of honour, shame, and in courage, and so long as wealth or honour can be obtained, careless as to what crime they may commit to obtain it. Many of these vices are owing to their system of government, and under a better series of rulers might in time be eradicated; but in the meantime deceit and untruthfulness get year by year more firmly instilled into the Persian disposition, so that at the present day it is looked upon as no insult to call another a liar, even though he be a man of the highest respectability. There is no more common expression in ordinary conversation than "*Een durogh ust*," "It is a lie;" and in referring to a man, even in the highest ranks—to speak any evil of whom would be dangerous—it is often said, without a thought of any dangerous consequences, "*Gou khourd*," in other words, "He has eaten filth, or lied." If the veracity of a native be doubted by a passing traveller, a common exclamation is, "Believe me, for though a Persian, I am speaking truth," an assertion which is, however, only valued at its proper worth, viz., a very low one. Revenge is another vice ingrained in the Persian character, but it is a feature common to nearly every Mohammedan or Eastern people. The brighter side of the Persian character is that they are pleasant in their manners, outwardly polite, courteous, and hospitable even to foreigners—much as they despise their religion—their hospitality being such that even a khan, or high nobleman—would not think it anything remarkable if he asked a travelling pedlar or peasant, who had called at his palace with goods for sale, to sit down and partake of the meal which he might be eating at the time.

In their several relations they are more lively than their co-religionists, the apathetic Turks. A visitor is received with the Mohammedan salutation of "Peace be with you," to which the reply is, "With thee be peace," while dear friends or relatives are embraced and kissed thrice on the cheek, and after the pious exclamation of "*Bismillah!*" "In the name of God!" pipes of the kind known as calleoons, in which the smoke is mellowed by being drawn through water, are produced, all ceremony is at an end, and general conversation is entered into. Visitors of distinction are received in a sort of state room, while more intimate friends are received with an absence of ceremony in correspondence to their rank or relationship to the host. In every case, it is a breach of etiquette to inquire after the health of the members of the household, and more particularly after that of the females of the family. The guest leaves his shoes at the door of the reception room. Coffee, without sugar or milk, in small china cups, often set in silver, is always presented after the pipes have been indulged in for a time; and if the host wishes to show special honour to the stranger he presents a cup to him with his own hands, and even pours out the beverage for him. Pipes are again smoked; then comes sweet sherbet, or sometimes highly-sweetened tea—without milk. A third pipe is smoked, and then the guests take their departure, after the host has formally pressed them to remain a little longer. Each party, however, knows well that this is simply ceremony, and is not intended to be received as anything more than such. Everything that is offered must be received, even though it is returned almost untasted. If, as is commonly the case in Persia, the visitor does not



LOUTY AND BAKTYAN: TYPES OF THE WANDERING TRIBES OF PERSIA.

smoke he may return the pipe with a polite gesture, and a remark to that effect; but if he smokes, he must regulate his pipe by that of the master of the house. When the host has finished all the guests must finish also. When an entertainment is given, the guests seat themselves on the felt carpet, a piece of calico being spread in front of them. This tablecloth is never washed for fear of ill-luck; accordingly, if the host be a man who gives many dinner parties, its colour presents in course of time a somewhat piebald appearance. Before each person is a piece of bread to serve as a plate. The dinner itself has been described by an eye-witness:—"The dishes are brought in on large metal trays, one of which is generally set down between every two or three individuals, and contains *pillaus*, stews, sweetmeats, and other delicacies; while bowls of sweet and sour sherbet, with long-handled spoons of pear-tree wood swimming in them, are placed within their reach. If the feast be very sumptuous, the dainties appear in great profusion, and are sometimes heaped one upon another. The cookery is excellent of its kind, though there is, throughout the arrangement, a mixture of refinement and uncouthness, highly characteristic of the country. Persians, like other Orientals, eat with their fingers; and the meat is cut into convenient mouthfuls, or stewed down so as to be easily torn to pieces. Accordingly, no sooner is the *Bismillah!* pronounced, when, bending forward, every hand is in a moment up to the knuckles in the rich *pillaus*, pinching or tearing off fragments of omelettes, stripping the *kubaubs* from their little skewers, plunging into savoury stews, dipping into dishes of sweetmeats, and tossing off spoonfuls of the pleasant sherbet. The profound silence is only interrupted by the rapid movement of jaws, or the grunts of deep satisfaction that from time to time arise from the gourmands of the party; for, though this people are temperate on common occasions, none enjoy more the pleasures of the table at convenient seasons. At length the host, or principal guest, having satisfied his appetite, rises from his recumbent posture, and throwing himself back on his seat, utters a deep guttural *Alhumdul-allah!* and remains holding his greasy hand across the other until an attendant brings water. On this, the remaining visitors, one after the other, as fast as the struggle between appetite and decorum permits, assume the same attitude. Warm water is brought in ewers, and poured over the dirty fingers,



MARRIAGE PROCESSION IN PERSIA.

which are held above a basin to catch the drippings, but are generally very imperfectly wiped. Order is gradually restored, calleeoons [pipes] are produced, the company take each the posture that pleases them best, consistent with due respect, and conversation becomes general." A dinner party in Persia is, in some respects, like the same entertainment elsewhere. If it be given in honour of a very great man, it is stiff, dull, and formal. The honoured guest walks into the room on rich stuffs, which become the property of his servants; he is placed on an elevated seat of honour, while the host sits humbly below him; his very motion is watched; if he be silent, all are silent; if he smile, they all laugh loudly, and if the great man condescend to make a joke, the whole company are politely convulsed with cachinnation. If, on the contrary, the guests be each others' equals, and the host be a convivial soul, the conversation flows freely; joke, anecdote, repartee, "keep the table in a roar;" somebody "obliges" with a poem, and everything goes merrily. The favourite amusements of the Persians of the better class are to sit under shady trees in pleasant gardens during the warm summer days, smoking calleeoons, and listening to stories and poems, while the wine-cup, forbidden by the Koran, but indulged in to intoxication by those who can afford it, circulates freely. Then comes the bath, which is the favourite place for gossip—in a word, the club of the Persian gentleman. His harem, his horses, dress, equipage, and the decoration of his rich apartments with fine carpets come next; while, if he be a town-bred gentleman, and care nothing for hawking and hunting, illuminations, fireworks, wrestlers, jugglers, buffoons, puppet-shows, musicians, and dancing and tumbling boys, fill up the spare time he can devote to amusements. In the town dancing girls are not often seen, but in the country-houses no entertainment would be complete without them. Horses form a great source of delight to a Persian gentleman, and all those who can afford the luxury have some fine animals of all the best Central Asiatic and Arabian breeds in their stables. The royal *ménage* is under the charge of a master of the horse, who is styled *meerachor*, or "lord of the stable." Horses are employed not only for riding purposes, but also in the hunting of the wild ass, the hare, the antelope, the mountain sheep and goats, in the chase and capture of all of which the Persian sportsman is skilful. Hawking forms another amusement; hares, herons, partridges, and bustards being killed by means of falcons tamed for the purpose.

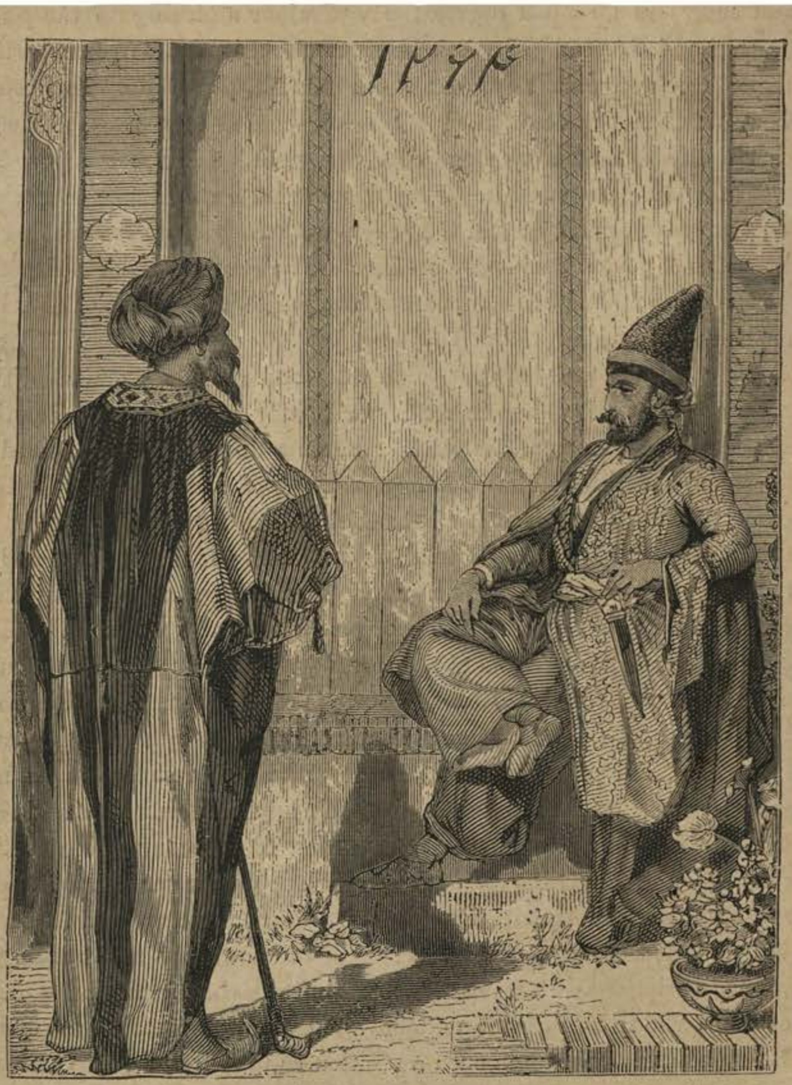
Various military exercises are indulged in by the young nobles and gentlemen, and their horsemanship in its skill and daring is celebrated throughout the East.

Pomp and ceremony accompany everything Persian. "To address a Persian, his eyes must be spoken to as well as his ears," is the character which one of them gave of his own countrymen.

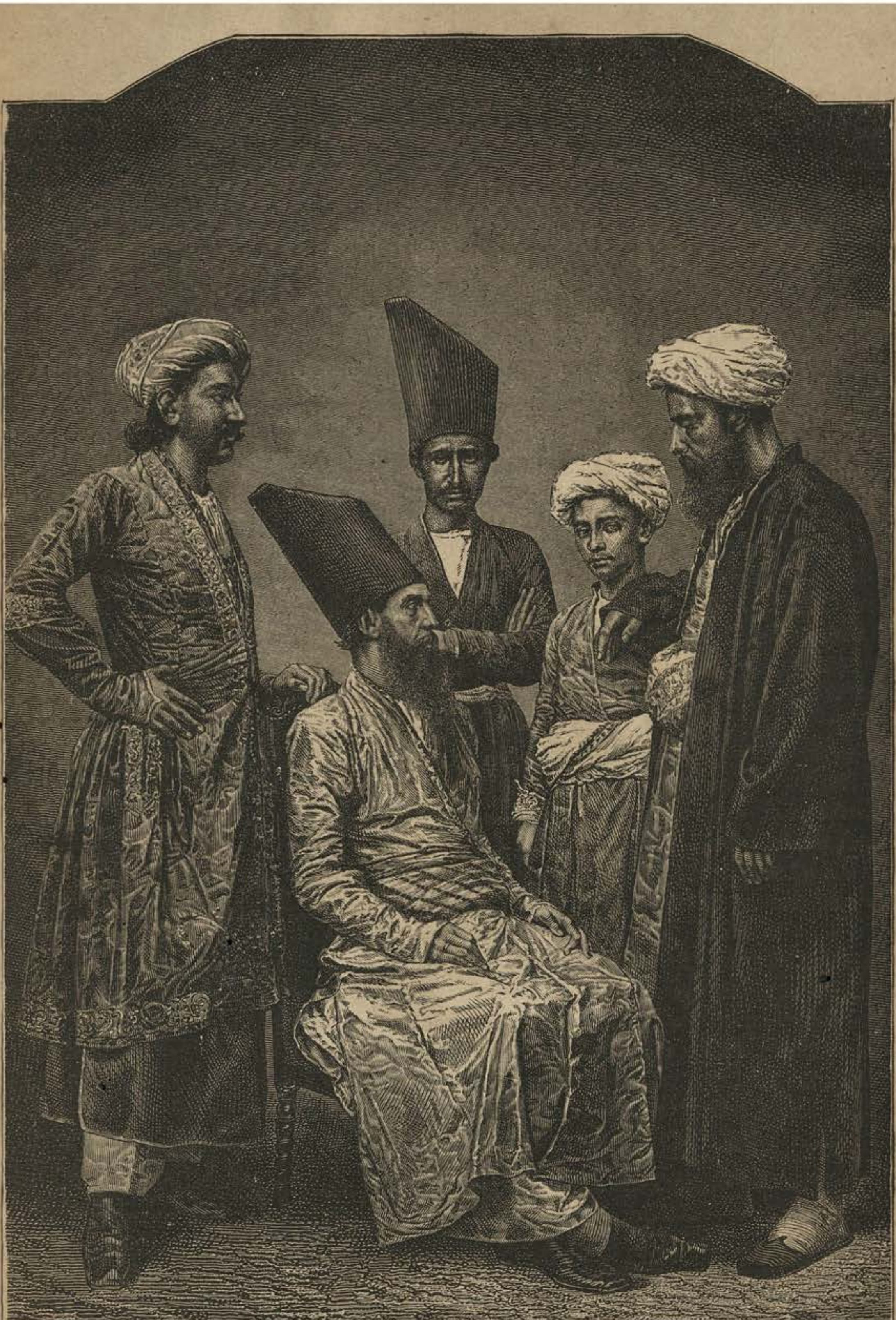
All ambassadors and foreigners are judged—they and their country—by the style of their equipages, the number of their servants, and the grandeur of their establishments. If a diplomatist stubbornly contests a point, and resists every encroachment, enforcing the utmost deference, and resenting the smallest neglect, his sovereign is believed to be a great potentate, and he himself is looked upon as a much more eminent man than if he had skilfully unravelled a knotty point of statesmanship, or successfully carried a difficult and delicate negotiation to a happy issue. Everything about the court is conducted with great ceremony, and the courtiers vie with each other in addressing the monarch by lofty-sounding titles. "King of kings," "The object of the world's regard," and so on, are not thought too great a display of hyperbole in addressing the Shah, even though to our ears, unaccustomed to such absurdities, they sound almost as as ridiculous as addressing a boy, or it may be a girl—the sovereign, let us say, of Timbuctoo—

as "Your majesty," "Dread sovereign," and so on! Petitions will begin with, "May I be your sacrifice;" and the Shah, in addressing his behests, always enunciates them in the third person, and in a deep, solemn, sonorous voice, thus: "The king is pleased," "The king commands," &c. Not only is the sovereign viewed with abject respect, but everything belonging to him shares in an equal degree the veneration attaching to the person of their owner. His *firmans* and *khelats* (commissions or proclamations) are received with the most profound submission, ceremony, and respect; and his portrait, like Gesler's hat, before which all men were to bow, was, on the occasion of its being carried to a neighbouring potentate, saluted, and homage paid to it at every stage of its progress. "All governors and nobles were enjoined to advance a stage to meet it. They dismounted on its approach; the arrival was announced by discharges of artillery; and the people were everywhere commanded to evince all possible demonstrations of joy on the happy occasion." The Persian birth and burial ceremonies are much the same as those among other Mohammedan people, these ceremonies being regulated by their religion, and not by their pristine habits.

The *marriage ceremonies* are, however, elaborate, and a little peculiar. Like all other Mohammedans, they are not allowed more than four legally married wives, but they can have as many concubines as they can purchase. Their harems may therefore be filled with women—either by marriage, purchase, or hire—so long as none of them are within the prohibited degrees of consanguinity. A girl is often betrothed to her future husband in infancy, and never sees him until they stand before the priest to complete the bargain. She has, however, the option of refusing to do so; but this is a privilege so hedged round with difficulties as to be practically useless. Of late, however, it has become customary to allow the future husband and wife to see each other, but only "under the rose." The marriage can be witnessed by two men, or by one man and two women. The certificate is carefully preserved by the woman; for in case there be a divorce, the possession of it is the only means by which she can recover her dowry. Great rejoicings take place at every marriage, and in the case of even the middle classes, are accompanied by an expenditure so profuse as to be in many cases almost ruinous. The feasting will last from three to forty days, according to the rank of the contracting parties: three, at least, are necessary. On the first, the company assembles; on the second, the bride's hands are stained with henna; on the third, the rite takes place, with much ceremony and not a little humour. Our space will only permit us to quote a brief account of the conclusion of a wedding witnessed by the author to whose descriptions we have been several times indebted. The bride has retired to her room. The husband (who in this case is a middle-aged widower) "makes his appearance, and a looking-glass is immediately held up in such a position as to reflect the face of his bride, whom he now for the first time sees unveiled. It is a critical and anxious moment, for it is that in which the fidelity of his agents is to be proved, and the charms of his beloved to be compared with those pictured by him in his ardent imagination; while the young ladies in attendance, as well as the gossiping old ones, are eager to catch the first glimpse, and communicate to all the world their opinion of her claims to beauty. After this, the bridegroom takes a bit of sugar-candy, and biting it in two halves, eats one himself, and presents the other to his bride"—a custom apparently traceable to the ancient *confarreatio*, or "eating together," a portion of the marriage ceremony in an early state of society, and of which the modern bridecake is a remnant. "On the present occasion he had no teeth to bite with, and so he broke the sugar with his fingers, which offended the young woman so much that she cast her portion away. He then takes her stockings, throws one over his left shoulder, places the other under his right foot, and orders all the spectators to withdraw. They retire accordingly, and the happy couple are left alone." One passage in this description illustrates a feature in the Persian women that we have not yet mentioned, viz., that, though little better than slaves, yet they exert their rights in a manner sometimes far from agreeable. Of ungovernable temper, and with no moral training which would teach them to restrain their passions, they exert their will in a most pronounced manner, go in and out of the harem when it pleases them (we are speaking of the harems of the middle classes); and when their desires are thwarted, will not unfrequently give forcible expression to their opinion with the sharp point of their slipper, on their husband's body! Slaves—generally Circassians and Georgians—are sometimes so far admitted to their



PERSIAN NOBLES.



PARSEES OF BOMBAY.

master's good graces as to become inmates of the harem; but slavery in Persia is of an exceedingly mild character. In all Persian families of consequence, the major domo, or person in trust—the house steward, in fact—will generally be found to be a *khanezadeh*, or slave born in the house—the offspring of domestic slaves, bought when young, and reared and married under their owner's auspices.

The third mode of union is accounted disreputable in most Moslem countries, viz., that of a female living with a man as his wife for a specified period. As an institution it is peculiar to Persia, and even there is not looked upon as in the highest degree to be commended as an article of "seraglioal" good manners. It is indulged in only by men of rank, and, practically, the marriages are for life, the contract being for ninety years, and the children of such marriages enjoying all the privileges of the regular wives. Divorce can be at any time had recourse to by the man, by adopting the simple expedient of putting away his wife. Most husbands, however, hesitate to adopt this mode of disposing of a bad matrimonial bargain. The scandal, and, above all, the necessity of returning her dowry, are motives which effectually restrain him from taking this step. If the wife, through ill-usage or other cause, sues on her part for a divorce, and obtains it, she forfeits all right to receive back any part of her dowry; and cases, as might be expected, are not unknown in which the baser sort have taken advantage of this law to force, by continued ill-usage, the wife to demand a divorce. Bad temper, extravagance, and such like, are the usual pleas brought forward as grounds for a divorce. Adultery is never one of these, for if this were proved to have been committed, capital punishment, without recourse to legal proceedings, would be the fate of the unhappy delinquent.*

GOVERNMENT.

Harassed by repeated invasions, plunderings, and long ages of misrule, Persia has fallen from the position she once occupied as the granary of the world. Her irrigation works, and other means by which the arid ground was made to blossom with heavy crops, have been long allowed to fall into decay. Instead of plenty, famine is more often a visitor in the land.† Few manufactures flourish, and a country which has great capabilities is allowed to lie half waste, a few miserable cultivators, or petty artisans, being the only source from which the taxes to supply the luxury and extravagance of the court can be extracted. In modern *Iran*, as Persia is called, there is no more a Darius or a Xerxes than there are the myriads which they led to victory and to ravage the unfortunate countries on which they descended. No longer do the Medean cohorts advance, "all gleaming in purple and gold." There are scarcely any roads in the country fitted for wheeled carriages, and nearly all the goods are borne on the backs of horses, mules, or camels; and accordingly—the drawbacks of a bad government not being taken into account—it is scarcely possible for a dense population to subsist in the country. From all accounts, the whole population of Persia—the wandering tribes, or Eeliants, whose numbers it is impossible to give with anything like accuracy—is less than 10,000,000. In Chardin's day, the population of Ispahan—the then capital—was estimated to be upwards of 700,000. In 1800, Sir John Malcolm considered that it could not contain more than 100,000 souls; and owing to the devastation it has suffered from famine since that date, it is probable that a census would show a much smaller number of inhabitants at the present day. Tehran has 85,000, Meshed 70,000, and Tabreez is credited with 100,000 inhabitants. We have spoken of the bad roads. Navigable rivers there are none; and though telegraphs have been erected, railways are a thing of the future. They may be built after the coalfields are developed. Every imported, or even home-produced, article which has to be carried any distance, is thus necessarily dear. Silk, cotton, tobacco, rice, a little grain, dried fruits, sulphur, horses, wax, and gall-nuts, are the chief exports. Of manufactured articles, she exports a little gold and silver brocade, and some silk and cotton stuffs—chiefly to Russia.

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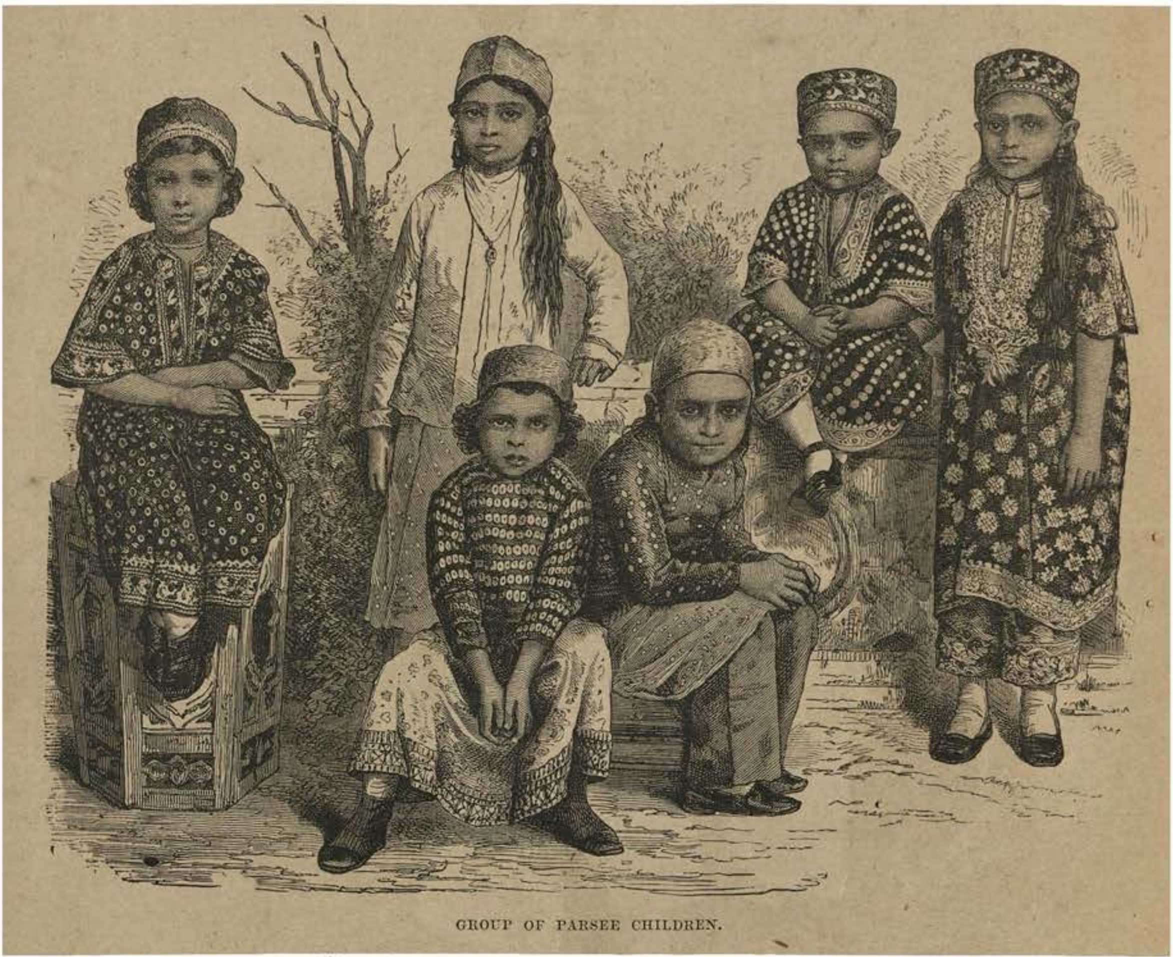
* Fraser's "Persia," p. 402.

† Of the last famine a graphic description will be found in Eastwick's "Journal of a Diplomats Three Years' Residence in Persia," vol. i., p. 290.

The whole revenue of the empire is probably less than two millions sterling, and is expended by the court, the cost of which is great, though, in justice, it ought to be mentioned that during the reign of the present Shah, the income has increased £700,000 per annum. Notwithstanding the Mohammedan law, the Persian kings frequently marry more than four wives. The late Shah had thirty, all married to him. The expenses of such an establishment must be enormous. The military force varies, the standing army being usually about 10,000 men, in addition to about 30,000 irregular cavalry, who are called out in case of necessity; but, on an emergency, the Persian monarch could put into the field 150,000 men, exclusive of camp followers, who are more dangerous to friends than foes. How well it was equipped in former times may be inferred from the story told regarding the army which beseiged the mud-walled town of a Kurdish chief. A big gun was brought up against it, but it was found that only three balls could be procured which would fit it. After two were fired, the town was summoned to surrender; but the only result was a request to his Persian majesty to "fire his *third* ball, and be done, and leave them alone in peace!" In modern times, European arms have been obtained, and the whole military force is being drilled after the modern methods, by English and other officers in the service of the present Shah. The system may be more satisfactory to the Persian Government than to the officers concerned, as they find that, beyond specious promises, they have considerable difficulty in rescuing any of their pay out of the hands of the officials through which it has to pass. The average pay of a private soldier is about £3 10s. per annum, in addition to a ration of three pounds of bread. A captain receives about sixty tomans, and a lieutenant-colonel commanding a regiment 500 tomans; while the colonel commanding two regiments—the highest rank in the army—only enjoys pay to the extent of about 1,000 tomans. A toman is at present worth about 8s. 4d.: in Malcolm's day it was valued at £1 sterling.

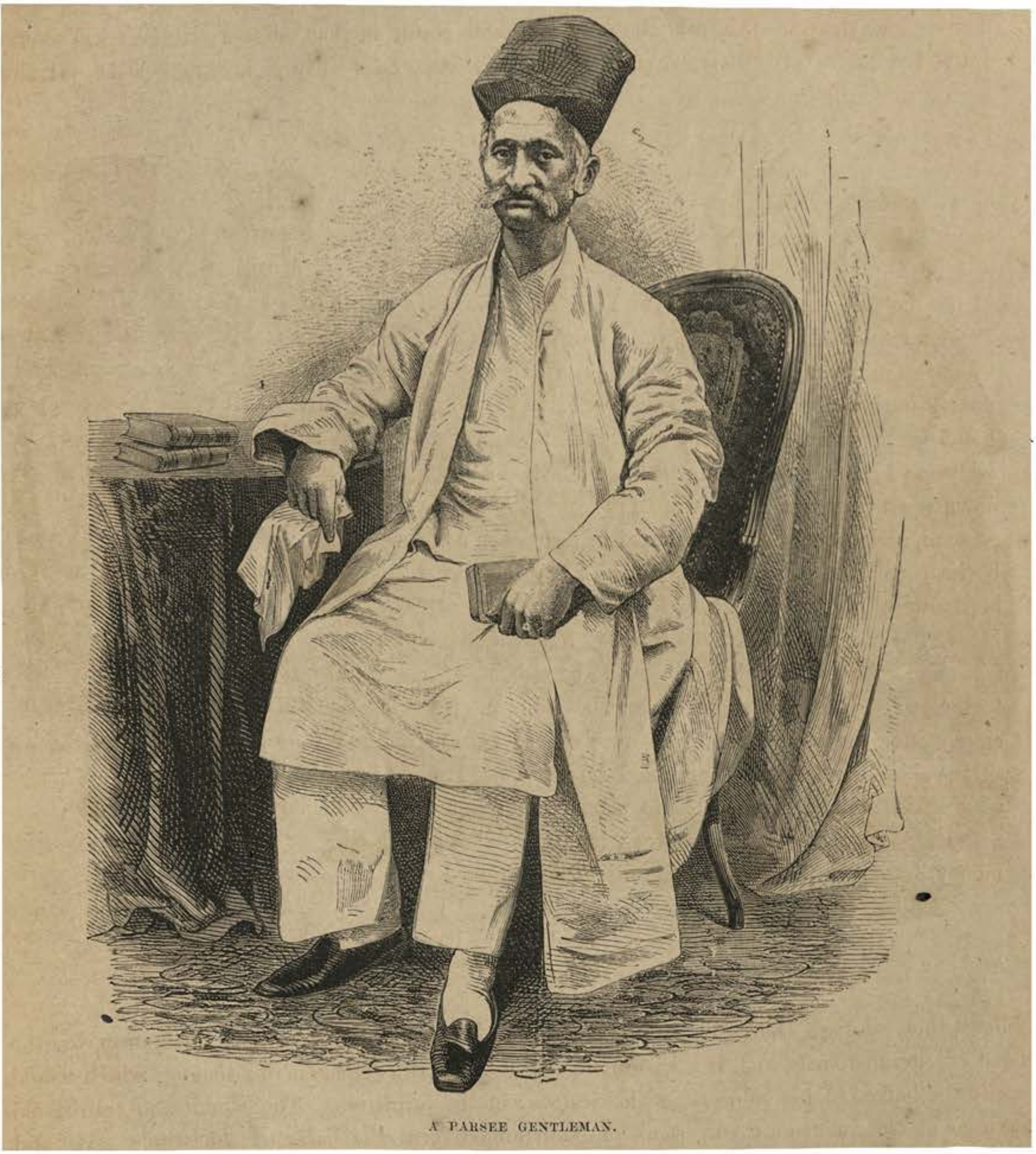
The monarch is known as the *Shah*, and has been from the earliest times an absolute sovereign, having despotic authority over the lives and property of all his subjects, from the highest to the lowest. Absolutism is a necessary form of government in countries where the subjects are too ignorant to be intrusted with the control of the supreme magistrate. But, independently of this, Persia has ever been a country subject to the conqueror, who has treated the people after the fashion of slaves whose ruler has come to reign over them, not by any will of theirs, but simply by the force of his arms and the prowess of his ancestors.

Though usually his eldest legitimate son succeeds him, yet he has the power, if so it seems good to him, to put any of his male offspring—the son of a slave it may be—on the throne; and at one time it was common for the reigning sovereign either to destroy or to put out the eyes of all his other sons, so that the heir selected might reign in peace. Horribly barbarous as was such wholesale murder, it is questionable whether the alternative of having the crown contested for in long and bloody fratricidal wars by the other sons, after their father's death, was not the less humane course. If the new sovereign proves weak, some of his enemies soon discover this, and the most probable result is that, after a rebellion and a series of murders, a new dynasty, in the person of a successful soldier, is established. It thus follows that, though the Shah of Persia is absolute, yet he has to keep his power by the force of circumstances, and, if a wise man, will hesitate to exercise it in a manner which would excite the hatred of his subjects or the jealousy of his ministers. The Koran and traditional sayings of the immediate successors of Mohammed form the basis of the whole civil and criminal law, as administered by the priests (p. 228) in Persia, as in other Mohammedan countries. But in Persia there is also the *urf*, or "common law," which is administered by secular magistrates. The Sheik-al-Islam is the head of the first-named court, though greatly controlled by the mooshteheds, or high priests, while the *urf* is administered by the king in person, by his lieutenants, governors of provinces, chief magistrates of towns, collectors



GROUP OF PARSEE CHILDREN.

of the revenue of districts, and by the officials who act under them. The power of life and death rests with the king, who rarely delegates it, except to princes of the blood-royal, or to governors of remote provinces. The governing principle in Mohammedan law is what has been called the *lex talionis*—an eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth. Murder, though a capital offence, can yet be compounded with the heirs of a murdered man. The punishment of death is often aggravated by the barbarous methods in which it is inflicted. Decapitation, strangling, or stabbing is the common mode of execution; but impalement, or tearing asunder by horses or by the bent boughs of trees, is not unfrequently had recourse to when, in the opinion of the


A PARSEE GENTLEMAN.

judge, the offence warrants this addition to the punishment. Tortures are sometimes introduced with a view to the discovery of hidden treasure, but rarely in any other case. The loss of the eyes is the common penalty for political offences. Mutilation is the punishment meted out to a thief, though he may be forgiven, or his sentence lightened, at the option of the injured party.

The king's relatives fill nearly all the chief posts, such as the government of provinces; while the other offices of state are given, as already related, to persons of lowly rank, whose influence might thereafter be expected through gratitude to be exercised in the king's behalf. Every province has a sum fixed for which it is taxed. Accordingly, the governor and his agents use every means to squeeze this sum, and whatever more they can, out of the inhabitants. The overplus remains in the official's hands as his salary or perquisite. At all events, no one troubles him so long as the royal treasury in Tehran receives the *quotum* at which the province has been rated. Extortion, therefore, as might be expected, flourishes in Persia, especially if the district be far removed from the capital, and in a soil congenial to it. No public improvements are dreamt of. Public works, even the king's palaces and gardens, in distant parts of the country, sometimes fall into decay for want of means to keep them in order. Private enterprise has not much encouragement. Let an ingenious individual introduce some improvement in manufacture, or some invention which promises to be lucrative. For a time he is allowed to go unmolested, until, his enterprise having proved successful, the government comes down upon him, and either wrests it from him, or so crushes him with exactions that all profit is gone, and the affair is abandoned in disgust. An acquaintance of Mr. Fraser was alarmed by hearing in a neighbouring house a sort of periodical punishment going on daily. Heavy blows were given, and at each blow a piteous cry of "Mercy! mercy! I have nothing! Heaven is my witness, I have nothing!" On inquiry, he ascertained that the cries proceeded from a merchant who, being reputed to be rich, was threatened by the governor of the place with torture, unless he would share his wealth with him. Knowing that this threat would in time be no empty one, the stoical merchant resolved to habituate himself to pain, so that he might be better able to resist the threatened demands. "He had brought himself to bear 1,000 strokes of a stick, and as he was able to counterfeit great exhaustion, he hoped to be able to bear as many blows as they would venture to inflict, short of death, without conceding any of his money." Every page of Persian history is stained with the records of the horrible cruelties practised by the monarchs, either through avarice, revenge, jealousy, fear of revolt, or similar motives. That the Shahs are far from amiable men or good kings could only be expected. Treated from his birth upwards to adulation of the most sickening character, having no wish left unfulfilled, and accustomed to consider those around him as only tools to gratify his caprice, the Persian monarch grows up to be a creature whose one thought is self-indulgence.

RELIGION AND LEARNING.

The ancient religion of the Persians (the religion of the Magi) has long given place to Mohammedanism, it is true of not a very strict type, and now lingers only among the Guebres, a persecuted sect in Persia,* and among the Parsees of India—an ancient colony of Persians, who have long almost monopolised the financial business of Bombay and of other cities of the country (Figs. on pp. 241, 244, 245). It was an elaborate system, to explain which would require space beyond that at our disposal—the central principle in it being the worship of fire and light. In its main features it was reformed and restored by Zoroaster—whose "Zendavesta" is one of the most ancient books in the Persian language—and who seems to have lived about five or six hundred years before the Christian era. Neither Parsees nor Guebres will ever willingly throw filth either into fire or water. The trade of a smith is proscribed among them by custom, though not by law. They will use no firearms,* nor extinguish a fire, though in cases of destructive fires they have been known to assist in putting them out. A Parsee or Guebre is never found as a sailor, his fear of defiling the sea keeping him from following this occupation. When a person is dying, they keep a dog at hand to drive away the evil spirits which flock around the bed at such a period. They neither bury nor burn their dead, but inter the body in a circular tower called *dockmetis*, or dokhma. In these towers are inclined planes on which the corpses are deposited, and the birds of the air are invited to devour them. They will even augur as to the happiness or misery of the deceased, according as the left or right eye is first pecked out by the vultures. The Parsee community forms perhaps the most intellectual element of Indian extra-European society.† With the exceptions mentioned, all the Persians proper are at the present day, nominally at least, Mohammedans, though divided, like the rest of the faithful, into several sects. The chief one is that of the Sheeahs or Shiites, who deny the right of the first four caliphs and all their immediate successors to the pontificate, claiming that Ali, whose adherents they are, was entitled to be the heir of Mohammed, owing to his being the first convert to the faith; to his being the cousin of Mohammed; to his marrying Fatima, the Prophet's daughter; and lastly, owing to the will of Mohammed himself appointing Ali his successor. On these grounds they differ from the Sonnees, the other sect, on many fundamental points into which it would be of very little interest to enter. The Sheeahs are, perhaps, the most fanatical of all the Moslem sects, making not only the prescribed pilgrimages to Mecca, Meshed, Ali, and Kerbalah, but flocking to Mushed and Koon, to visit the tombs of Iman Reza and his sister Fatima; to Ardebil, where lies interred the first of the "Suffees," ‡ and to numerous other places with even less reason.

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* They are now *partially* protected, and even in former times they practised their faith in certain districts. One of these localities was Herat (now under Afghanistan); and, as a specimen of the mendacious character of the Persians, it may be mentioned that when the fanatical Mohammedan mob burnt down one of their

With the Mohammedan religion all the learning of which Persia can boast came into the

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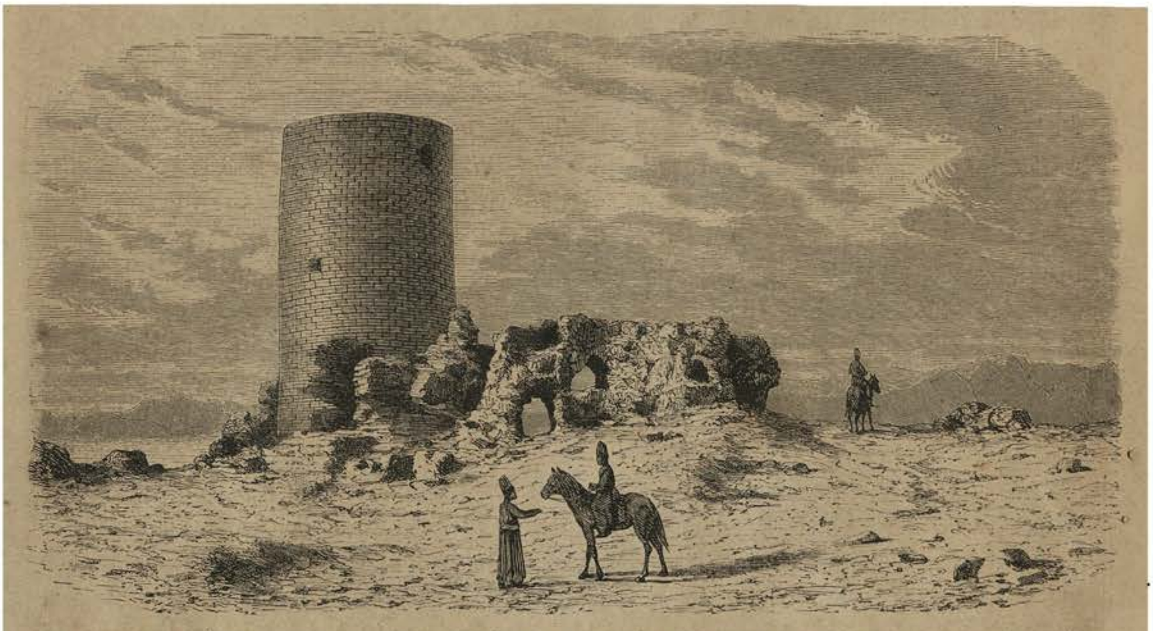
temples, they could obtain no recompense for their loss, because, forsooth, 4,000 inhabitants of Herat swore that there had never been a fire temple in the place, and of course no redress could be expected; for what so many highly respectable citizens declared on oath had never existed could not possibly have been destroyed! There were in Persia, not over a century ago, over 30,000. The number now in the country does not exceed 3,000, and is yearly decreasing, their Parsee co-religionists in India, in spite of the discouragement of the Persian government, assisting many of them to immigrate to that country. In Persia they are not allowed to ride on horseback, are taxed twenty per cent. of the value of any land they buy, and are heavily fined on their return from a foreign country. If a Guebre kills or wounds a Mohammedan, he and all his family are killed. If, on the contrary, a "true Believer" kills a Guebre, a fine of £8 meets the exigencies of the offence.

* That is to say, *theoretically* they will not. However, when they fought with the Moslems, they did not hesitate to take advantage of these modern warlike appliances to overcome their enemies.

† For a full account of this people see, among others, Dosabhoy Framjee's "The Parsees: their History, Religion, Manners and Customs," and a privately printed volume ("The Parsees," 1874) by the Hon. C. D. Poston, who has supplied me with much interesting original information regarding these people.

‡ A sect of the Sheeahs, whose doctrines are of rather a wild character. In India they are a wide-spread body. In Persia the term is synonymous with the English dervish. It is, perhaps, derived from the Greek Σοφοι, "wise men.'

country: but that is little. Logic, metaphysics, judicial astrology, astronomy, mathematics, and medicine, are about the only branches of learning cultivated with any degree of success. Much of their astronomy, as well as their logic and metaphysics, is puerile in the extreme. Geography is little understood, though mathematics is taught on much better principles, owing to their possessing the work of Euclid. To use the language of Mr. Mounsey, "Probably a Cornish miner or a Cumberland ploughman knows as much of Central Asia as an enlightened Persian does of anything beyond the frontiers of his own country." It is questionable, considering the state of his country, whether he has by his lack of knowledge greatly decreased his happiness and peace of mind. Alchemy is a favourite study, but chemistry is unknown. Their knowledge of medicine is on a par with the state of the science as left by Galen and Hippocrates, whose disciples they profess to be. A few colleges have been established, but are not very prosperous, and the experiment of sending promising young men to be educated in Europe does not meet with much approval from the Persian conservatives.

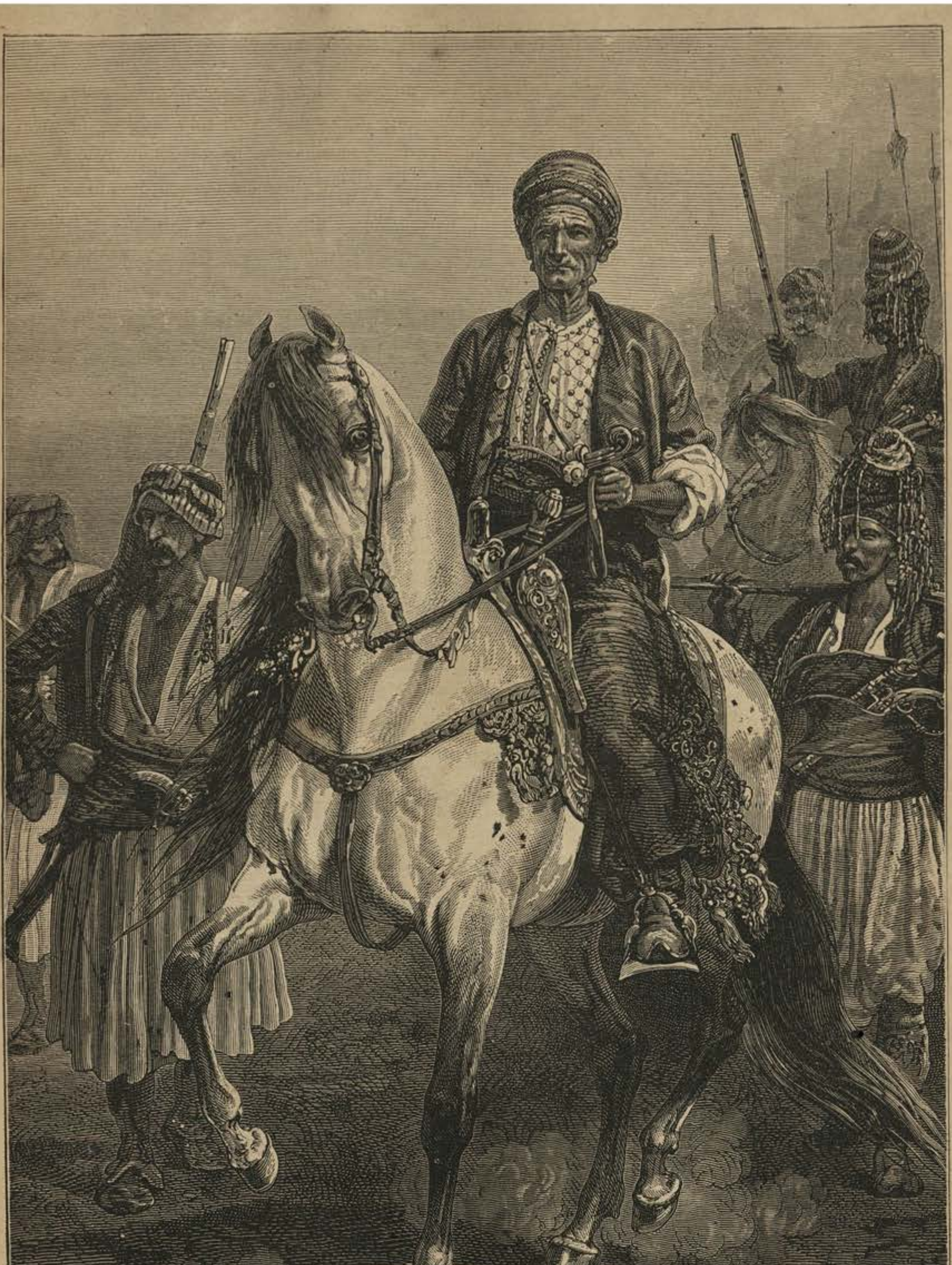


RUINS OF TOUS (THE ANCIENT CAPITAL OF KHORASAN, SEVENTEEN MILES FROM MUSHED, THE PRESENT CAPITAL).

Fine art is at a low ebb, it being repugnant to the Mohammedan faith (the sect of Sheeahs excepted) to make representations of any created thing. The stone and seal cutters of Shiraz and Ispahan are, however, famous for their skill, as Cashan is for lacquered tiles. Herat, Mushed, and Shiraz, are equally famous for their sword-blades, and work in steel generally. Their coins are struck by the hammer, and are very clumsily executed.

The literature of Persia consists chiefly of writings on theology and polemics, and some works of history, romance, and poetry. Some of their manuscripts are beautifully executed. Persia, indeed, was once famous for her bards, and the flowery, historical songs of Meerkhond and Khondemir are to this day sung

"——At midnight, in the Persian tongue,
Along the streets of Ispahan."



KARA FATIMA, KURDISH CHIEFTAINESS AND HER SUITE.

We have been describing Persia as it is; but, as elsewhere in the East, European habits are creeping in. French millinery is seen in Tehran, and Krupp guns in Shiraz. It must still be fresh in the mind of every reader how the Shah (see Portrait), resplendent in jewels, visited this country in 1873, ostensibly with a view to seeing what improvements he could introduce into his country. He had a wide field for his philanthropy to work upon. But beyond the recollection of numerous dinners, reviews, and balls, all related in a published diary, more amusing than creditable to his intelligence, and the possession of many glittering orders, it does not appear that the European travels of the "king of kings" has resulted in much benefit to his kingdom. The European powers during his visit seemed more desirous of cultivating his friendship for some fancied military advantage that might at a future period be gained thereby, and among other equally appropriate presents, a battery of field-guns was presented to him. A yoke of oxen and a plough would have been better. Many internal improvements were indeed at the time projected, and a concession granted to a European capitalist to construct railways, but the concession was afterwards withdrawn, and it does not appear that anything more is likely to be done. His army will no doubt be put on a better footing, but whether that will be a remarkable advantage to himself or to any one else is an open question.

CHAPTER XIV.

KURDS, BELUCHI, AFGHANS, PARAPOMISANS, &c.

THE remaining people belonging to the Persian stock must be considered more briefly than the Persian proper, interesting in many respects though some of them are. All are wilder and more barbarous than the Persians of Iran, and in most cases are migratory tribes of herdsmen, or mountain warriors.

KURDS.

These are the inhabitants of Kurdistan, but both to the north and south, east and west of Kurdistan there are offshoots of the Kurdish race. They are in many cases only nominally subject either to Turkey or Persia, within whose bounds they happen to fall. In appearance they are wild, fierce, and tall, with elongated faces, prominent features, large mouths, and dark complexions (Figs. on p. 249). In the hill country the chiefs are all but independent. Though there are several cities in their territory they do not inhabit them, nor, except for purposes of war, do they assemble in large encampments, but prefer living, either in tents or houses, in groups of a few families. During two thousand years their habits and condition of life have changed very little. Like their ancestors, they keep up a chronic state of warfare with each other. Their spirit is high, courage and temper fiery, and their habits those of martial freebooters. They never go unarmed, and are always ready to fight, rob, or levy black mail. In their chief towns there are mosques and priests professing Mohammedanism; the civil law, as written in the Koran, is administered; but at the same time they are governed, as were their forefathers, by the authority of their chiefs, to whom they profess implicit obedience. They are, however, never backward to fall upon the hated infidel, whether Armenian, or orthodox Christian. They are a people divided into various sub-tribes. The strongest and bravest of a chief's sons succeeds him in the government; but, once nominated, a chief cannot be deposed.* A woman may even be a chieftainess (see portrait of Fatima, the Kurdish chieftainess, on p. 249). They marry within their own tribe, and the women suffer almost none of the seclusion so customary in other Mohammedan countries. Blood feuds are often extinguished by the payment of a certain number of oxen. The most extraordinary piece of policy existing among them consists in a certain number of professional thieves being attached to each tribe, whose duty it is to rob for the support of the chief. Paying only as much allegiance to the Persian monarch as they are forced, some of their chiefs, when they feel they can do so with impunity, keep almost regal state. The "Wallee" of Ardilan used to live in princely state at Senna, and maintained a considerable army.

Arms and horses form the great delight of a Kurd, and in the management of both they greatly excel. "When a Kurdish chief takes the field," writes Colonel McDonald Kinnear, "his equipment varies little from that of the knights in the days of chivalry; and the Saracen who fought under the great Saladin was probably armed in the same manner as he who now makes war upon the Persians. His breast is defended by a steel corslet inlaid with gold and silver, whilst a small wooden shield, thickly studded with brass nails, is slung over his left shoulder when not in use. His lance is carried by his page or squire, who is also mounted; a carbine is slung across his back; his pistol and dagger are stuck in his girdle, and a light scimitar hangs by his side. Attached to the saddle, on the right, is a small case holding three darts, each about two feet and a half in length; and on the left, at the saddle-bow, you perceive a mace, the most deadly of all his weapons; it is two feet and a half in length, sometimes embossed with gold, at others set with precious stones. The darts have steel points, about six inches long, and a weighty piece of iron or lead at the upper part to give them velocity when thrown by the hand."†

The word "Kurd" is probably a corruption of Karduchi or Kermanji—their own designation from the European name is unknown among them—the people whose bows and slings, according to Xenephon's "Anabasis," inflicted more mischief on the retreating ten thousand Greeks under Cyrus than all the rest of the army of Artaxerxes. Saladin, the famous Saracen leader, was a Kurd. When the Kurdish tribes are wanderers, they are chiefly shepherds, living on the produce of their flocks and herds, supplemented by occasional robbery. The young men occupy themselves in military exercises, in hunting, or in listening to tales or witnessing the tricks of buffoons. The women spin, weave carpets and cloth, or prepare the produce of the dairy, while the boys and old men look after the flocks. The pastures bare, they shift to another place; but in no case is it safe for a small or unarmed party of travellers to meet these wandering hordes. Robbery and death would likely enough be their lot; if it was not, then it was no love for the travellers or motives of humanity which restrained them, but probably a doubt as to the attack being successful.

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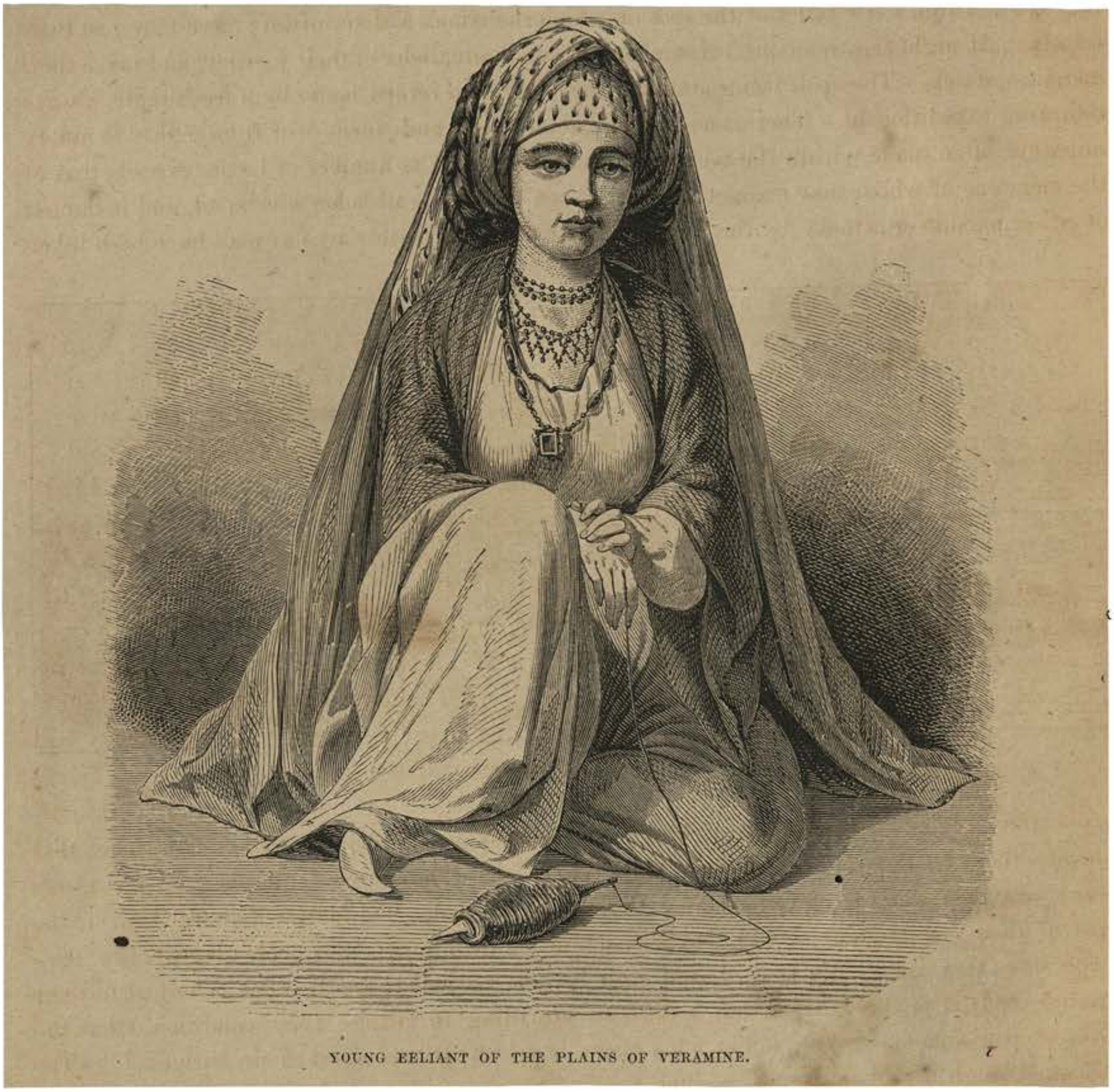
* Kara Fatima (Fatima the Black) and her followers created quite a sensation in Constantinople, which they visited at the time of the Crimean War. The Chieftainess herself was for a time the lioness of Stamboul.

† "Travels in Khorassan," p. 254 *et seq.*

The *Talish* tribes are closely allied to the Kurds, inhabiting the strip of fenny and mountainous land between the mouths of the Kur and the Ghilan. They are rawboned, strong, and hardy. Firmly devoted to their chiefs, they have been compared to the old Scotch Highlanders. "One young man takes charge of his chief's firelock, another of his cloak, a third of his pipe, a fourth stands by his horse's head as he mounts."* Passing over various small or mixed tribes, we must devote a few words to the



YOUNG EELIANT OF THE PLAINS OF VERAMINE.

BELUCHI.

They inhabit Beluchistan, and speak a language closely allied to the Persian. They follow the occupation of herdsmen, but are also a little addicted to a predatory life. Their skin is very dark. Some live in felt or skin tents, others in mud houses, while a third class ensconce themselves in forts. The Western Beluch is said to be more of a robber than any of his brethren. According to Latham, "mounted on camels, frugally furnished with dates, bread and cheese, and a little water in a leather bag, the depredators ride on, with as few stoppages as possible, till they come within a few miles of the spot on which the attack is determined: here they rest their camels. At night they remount, accomplish the small remainder of their journey, and make their merciless attack. The spoil being attained, they prefer to return home by a fresh route, always returning expeditiously. There is no care for camel's flesh, and journeys of from eighty to ninety miles are often made within the four-and-twenty hours. The number of beasts exceeds that of the men, one of whom may manage as many as ten or twelve, all laden with spoil, and in danger of either pursuit or attacks by the way. At first the lot of such slaves as may have been taken is pre-eminently miserable. They are blindfolded as soon as caught, and tied on the camel that conveys them to the country of their future masters. The women's heads and the men's beards are then shaved, and the hair extirpated with lime. This is to disgrace them in the eyes of their countrymen should they succeed in returning to them. However, when once made safe, they are kindly treated, and soon become reconciled to their lot, attached to their masters, and (it is the master that speaks) so unwilling to change their condition, 'that the severest punishment we can inflict upon them is to turn them about their business.'" The Béluch, though a robber, is not a pilferer, is not ungenerous, is true to his word, hospitable, and treats his women with respect. Most of their country is subject to the rule of the Khan of Khelat.

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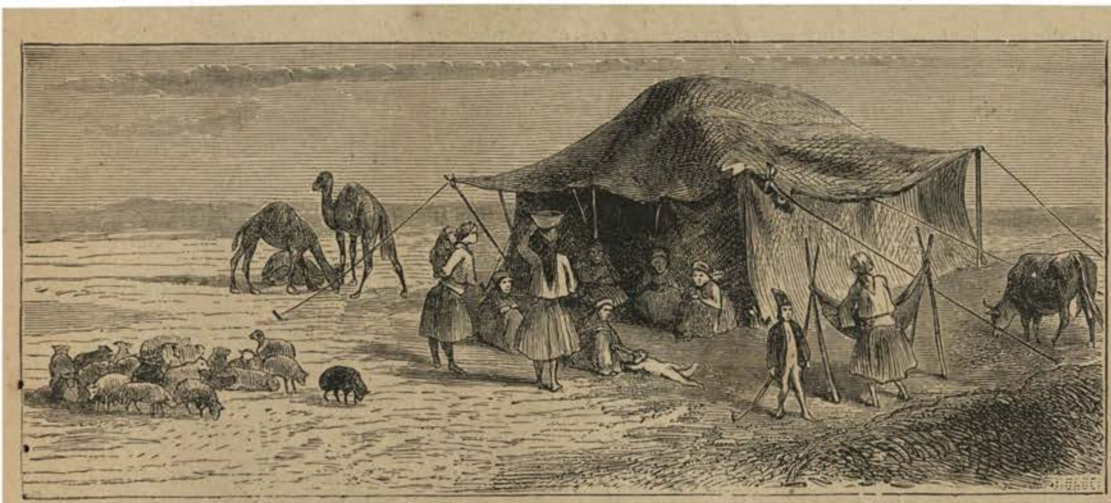
* For a description of Kurdish habits, see Lieut. Milligan's "Wild Life among the Kourds."



EELIANT ENCAMPMENT, PLAINS OF VERAMINE.

The *Brahúi* are in Beluchistan, but not of it. They inhabit the higher grounds, and in their character are nomadic. Short, thick-set, and with round faces, flat features, and brown hair and beards, they differ from the tall, regular-featured Beluchi. Their language is different from the Persian, Beluchi, and Afghan, and is in many respects, according to Latham, Tamul. They are all Mohammedans, and indeed consider themselves particularly favoured in so far that the

Prophet visited them one night under the disguise of a dove, and left them a number of saints for their guidance. They are hardy and industrious, and in their moral character are better than the Beluchi. Their chiefs are powerful, and the "nation" divided into many tribes. Pottinger names seventy-four of these, and says that he could double the number. The women are little, if at all, secluded. Notwithstanding the differences mentioned, both Pottinger and Elphinstone look upon them as connected with the Beluchi, the habits of both peoples being very similar.

AFGHANS.

Afghanistan is the country of the Afghans, or Pushtú,* though members of the nation are found in greater or less communities in localities outside the boundaries of Afghanistan. Their country is for the most part an elevated plateau, with mountains intersected by valleys in parts, while other sections of the country consist of open plains. The Afghans are divided up into several tribes, differing in many respects in government, manners, dress, and habits. It is accordingly difficult to strike upon characteristics common to all of them, and which combined give a national character to the Afghans. "If a man," writes Mr. Elphinstone, to whose account of the Afghans we are indebted for much of our information, "could be transported from England to the Afghan country without passing through Turkey, Persia, or Tartary, he would be amazed at the wide and unfrequented deserts, and the mountains covered with perennial snow. Even in the cultivated part of the country he would discover a wild assemblage of hills and wastes, unmarked by enclosures, not embellished by trees, and destitute of navigable canals, public roads, and all the great and elaborate productions of human industry and refinement. He would find towns few and far distant from each other; and he would look in vain for inns or other conveniences which a traveller would meet with in the wildest parts of Great Britain. Yet he would sometimes be delighted with the fertility and populousness of particular plains and valleys, where he would see the productions of Europe mingled in profusion with those of the torrid zone, and the land laboured with an industry and a judgment nowhere surpassed. He would see the inhabitants following their flocks, in tents, or assembled in villages, to which the terraced roof and mud walls give an appearance entirely new. He would be struck at first with their high and even harsh features, their sunburnt countenances, and their long beards, their loose garments, and their shaggy mantles of skins. When he entered into their society he would notice the absence of regular courts of justice, and of everything like an organised police. He would be surprised at the fluctuation and instability of the civil institutions. He would find it difficult to comprehend how a nation could subsist in such disorder; and would pity those who were compelled to pass their days in such a scene, and where minds were trained by their unhappy situation to fraud and violence, to rapine, deceit, and revenge. Yet he would scarce fail to admire their martial and lofty spirit, their hospitality, and their bold and simple manners, equally removed from the suppleness of a citizen and the awkward rusticity of a clown; and he would probably before long discover, among so many qualities that excited his disgust, the rudiments of many virtues. But an English traveller from India would view them with a more favourable eye. He would be pleased with the cold climate, elevated by the wild and novel scenery, and delighted by meeting many of the productions of his native land. He would be at first struck with the thinness of the fixed population, and then with the appearance of the people; not fluttering in white muslins, while half their bodies are naked, but soberly and decently attired in dark-coloured woollen clothes, and wrapped up in brown mantles, or in large sheepskin cloaks. He would admire their strong and active forms; their fair complexions and European features; their industry and enterprise; the hospitality, sobriety, and contempt of pleasure which appear in all their habits; and, above all, the independence and energy of their character. In India, he would have left a country where every movement originates in the government or its agents, and where the people absolutely go for nothing; and he would find himself among a nation where the control of the government is scarcely felt, and where every man appears to pursue his own inclination undirected and unrestrained. Amidst the stormy independence of this mode of life, he would regret the ease and security in which the state of India, and even the indolence and timidity of the inhabitants, enable most parts of the country to repose. He would meet with many productions of art and nature that do not exist in India, but in general he would find the arts of life less advanced, and many of the luxuries of Hindostan unknown. On the whole, his impression of his new acquaintances would be favourable, although he would feel that, without having lost the ruggedness of a barbarous nation, they were tainted with the vices common to Asiatics, yet he would reckon them virtuous compared with the people to whom he had been accustomed; would be inclined to regard them with interest and kindness; and could scarcely deny them a portion of his esteem."

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* Or *Pushtun*, plural *Pushtauneh*. In India, by a process of verbal corruption, the name has become *Peitan*, or *Patan*. They call their country *Wilāyat*. Hence the term *Wilayati* is also often applied to them by the natives of Hindostan. (See Raverty's "Dictionary" and "Grammar of the Language of the Afghans," 1860).

Whence came the Afghans is still a moot question, and is likely ever to be. It is about as probable that they descended from the Jews, as the Romans and Britons from the Trojans, and the Irish from the Milesians; or that the rather numerous gentlemen from the Emerald Isle—who claim to be sprung from the loins of the kings, who seem to have been a rather plentiful crop in former times, if one may judge from the multiplicity of their putative offspring—are of the mythical origin alleged. They do not call themselves Afghans—this apparently being the Persian name *—but Pushtú. Each tribe is a complete commonwealth within itself, and each subdivision of the tribe has its chief—a *spīnghīrai* or *spīnzhīrai*—*i.e.*, "white beard," if it consists of only a few families, but a *khan* if it is a whole tribe, or an independent branch of it. The whole country is governed by a king, or *amīr*, with whom the selection of the inferior chief in some cases rests; in others, the election lies with the people. The provincial governors are selected from the royal princes. Though the chiefs are obeyed, yet, as an Afghan looks upon the interest or honour of the community as the main thing, he would never hesitate to disregard the orders of the chief if they were, in his opinion, at variance with public interest. The nomad tribes pay tribute to the Cabul Government, though their respective chiefs furnish a contingent for the regular army, and constitute the bulk of the militia; but beyond this, in times of peace they are practically independent. All disputes, unless of imperial importance, are referred to their chiefs, who in turn settle minor affairs through the agency of the "grey beards." The revenue is collected by the provincial governors—the "farming" of the provincial revenues being most generally given to the highest bidder—and the surplus, after defraying the expenses of government, is paid into the imperial treasury, and used in the support of the royal family. The taxes are always difficult to collect, and in the case of the mountain tribes never without coercion. So much is this the case, that it is not until the exchequer is empty that an attempt is made to get these turbulent subjects to pay to the Afghan Cæsar the things which are his. A force is then marched into their mountain homes, and by means of a general pillage something in the way of tribute is collected. The late king, or *amīr-i-kabir*—Dost Mohammad Khan—was a man of great celebrity and many years; but before his death his power declined—little more than one-half of the kingdom acknowledging his rule. The civil war which followed on his death still further disunited the kingdom, and it is now far from as powerful as it was twenty or twenty-five years ago. The khan is assisted in the government by a council, or *jeerga*, composed of certain heads of divisions. In civil cases the Koran is the law, but criminal cases are judged according to Afghan custom or usage. Thus, this *ukhtunwalī*, or usage of the Afghans, sanctions private revenge, which the Koran prohibits; and the *lex talionis*

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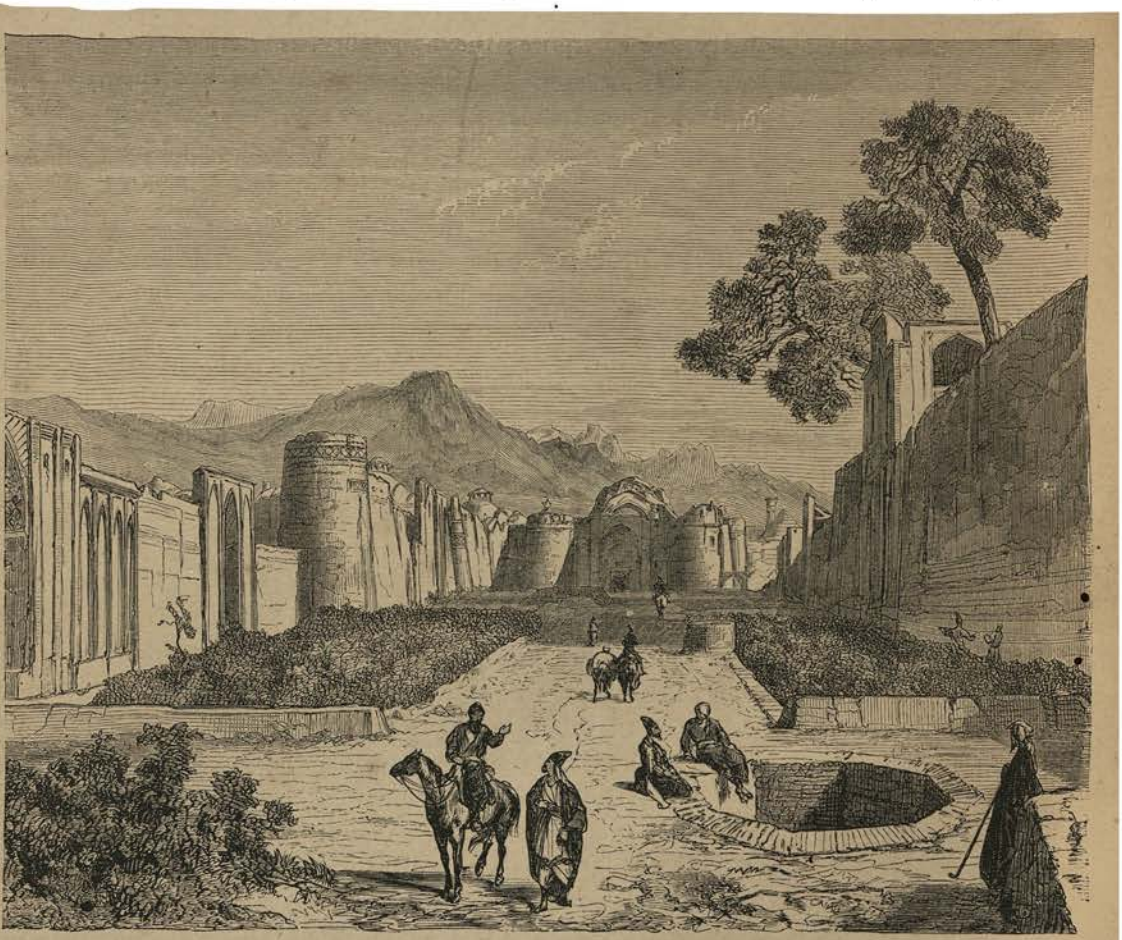
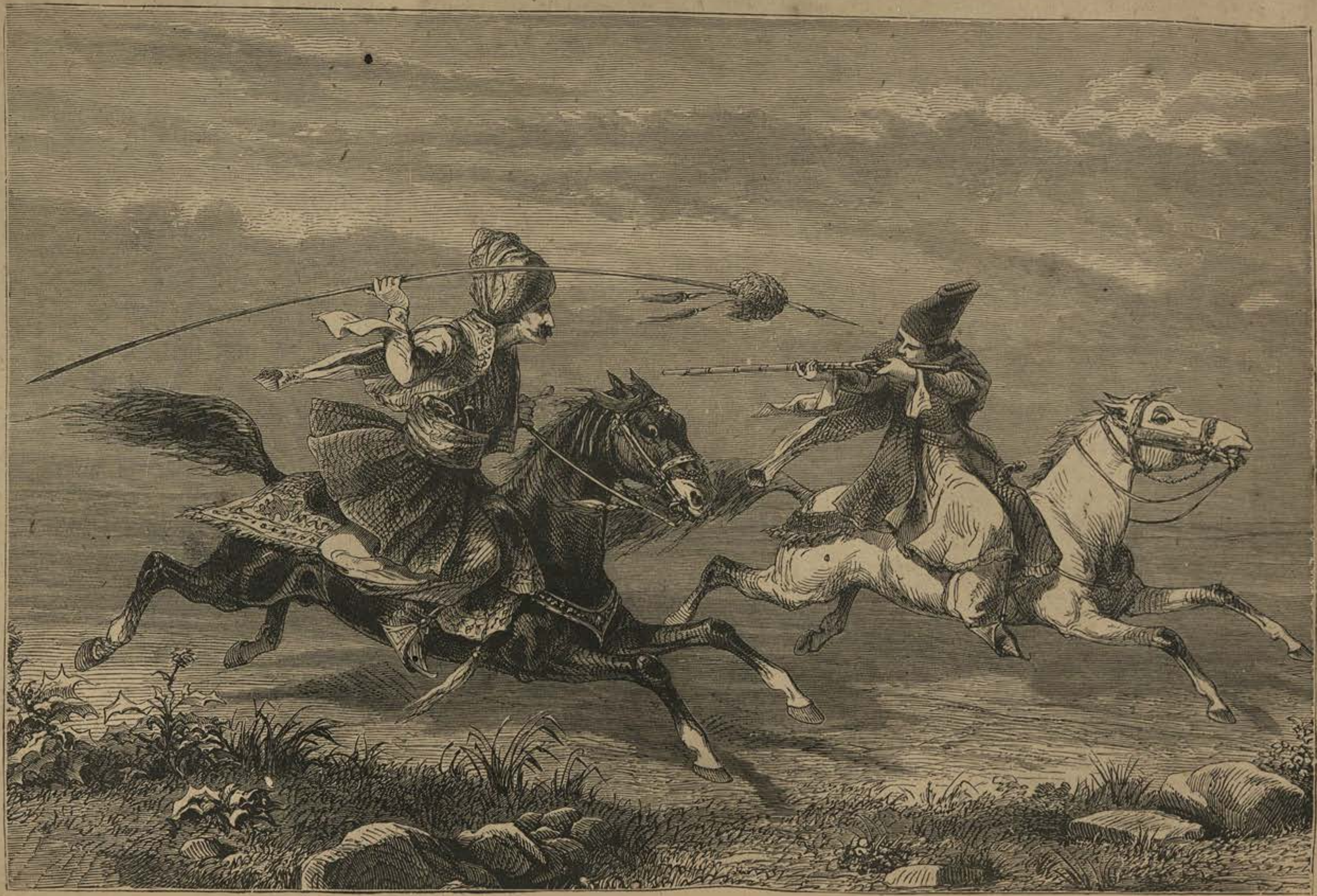
* The Afghans themselves have many theories on the subject. One party of etymologists attributes it to the fact that when the mother of their great ancestor gave birth to him she cried out, "*Ifagora*" (I am free); while another equally unreliable set declare that it is from the exclamation she gave forth on the same interesting occasion, viz., "Afghān!" a word which in Persian signifies "woe," "grief," "alas!" &c.

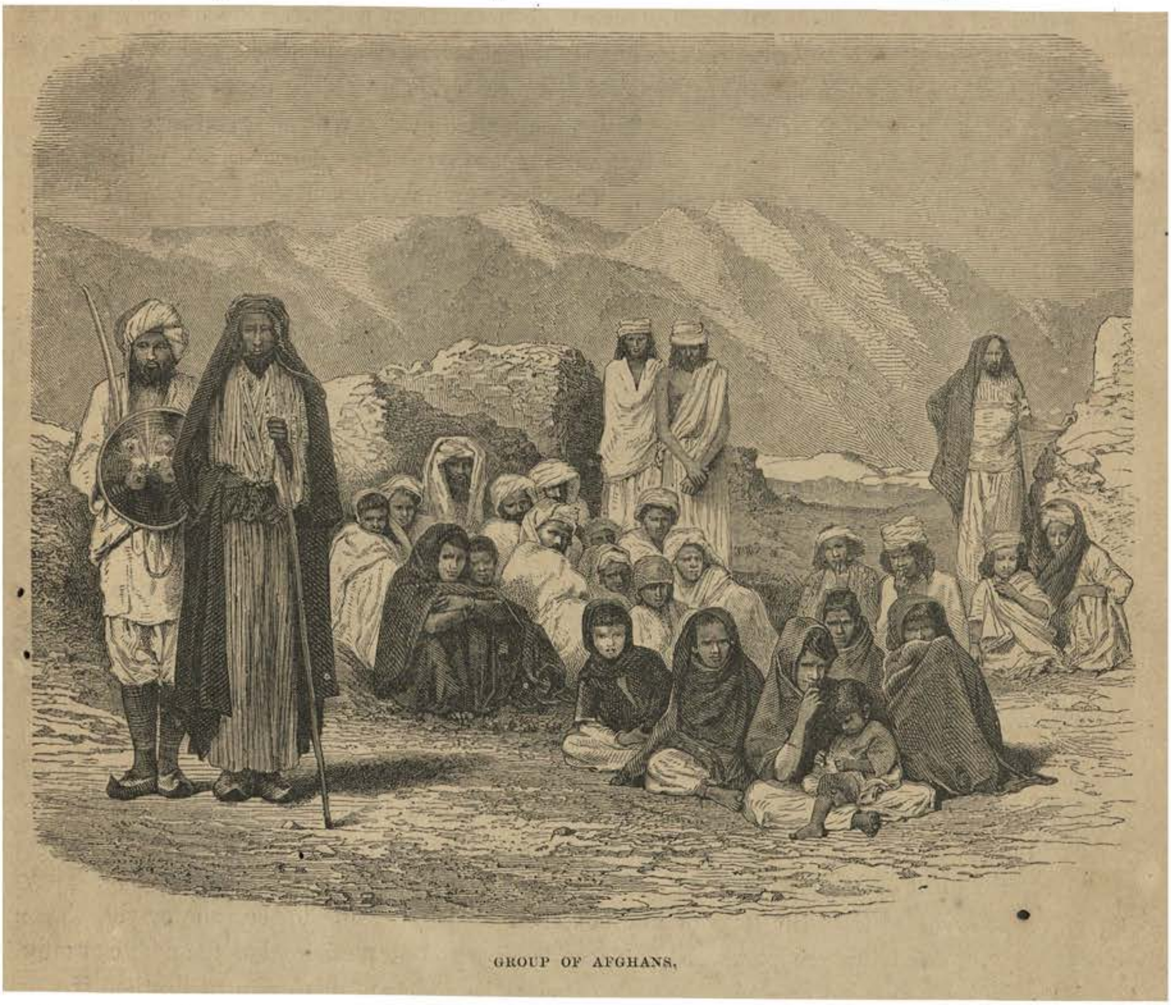


SCENE IN AFGHANISTAN.



PERSIAN GUERILLA WARFARE.

is strictly adhered to, unless an apology, accompanied by an ample recompense, consisting, if the offence has been grievous, not unfrequently of several females—an expensive luxury in Afghanistan, as all wives must be bought. Troublesome political rivals are frequently got out of the way by means of poison—that prime instrument of Eastern diplomacy. The *kisas*, or avenging of blood, is a public show or ceremony. After the homicide or murderer (for there is no distinction between the two) is adjudged, the nearest relative will kneel on the doomed man's chest, and then coolly cut his throat from ear to ear.



GROUP OF AFGHANS.

The military establishment is large, and is composed of standing army and militia. In some tribes every man is liable to service; in others a foot-soldier is required for every plough, or a horseman for every two. Though these militiamen receive no pay, except on active service, yet in some cases the *jeerga* will make good to him any loss he has sustained by the killing of his horse, &c.

The standing army comprises some seventeen or eighteen regiments of infantry, dressed, equipped, and drilled after the manner of the British army in India, in whose cast-off and condemned clothing they are attired, these uniforms being bought up at the frontier stations in India for this purpose. There are, in addition, three or four regiments of dragoons, also a sorry imitation of the British cavalry, and a few artillerymen, with about 100 pieces of cannon, chiefly brass, and of home manufacture. The few iron guns they have are old and rusty, and more dangerous, by all accounts, to themselves than to their enemies. The king is the nominal head of the army, and the regiments are commanded by the princes of the blood, without respect to military rank or qualifications. Their arms are also chiefly cast-off British weapons, and are provided for the soldier at a fixed price, which is deducted from his pay. Percussion guns are not much in vogue, as they cannot manufacture caps. Accordingly, flintlocks, and even matchlocks, with which they can shoot very accurately, are chiefly in use. The mountain-tribes often throw stones by hand in their wars, and can hit the mark aimed at with the greatest correctness and effect. The army is paid in cash, or by grants of land; their pay, however, is very irregular, though nominally made every four months. They make up for this remissness on the part of the government by plundering the peasant and committing such excesses that they are the curse of the country. The example is set by their chiefs, who know no restraint. If a horse, a youth, a maiden, supplies of food, &c., are wanted for his camp, it is all the same—away they must go. Indeed, were it not for their love of country and independence, nothing would keep this Afghan kingdom together under such a system. The militia is very numerous, and is armed with the long Afghan rifle, the sword, or, in its stead, the Afghan knife and the shield. The cavalry of the militia are, as a rule, only armed with lance, sword, and pistols, or the blunderbuss with the bell-shaped mouth. The militia is in reality under the direct command of the chiefs, though it is supposed to owe allegiance to the king. They provide their own arms, and, except when on active service for the state, receive no pay. The army is undisciplined, and little to be depended on, though, unmindful of tribal jealousies, it will rally readily to the defence of the country.

If a family wishes to quit one tribe, it can be admitted into another on terms of perfect equality. There is even a provision for the admission of persons who are not Afghans into the community, and every tribe has numbers of these "Humsayahs" attached to it. They are treated with great consideration, but are not allowed to take any part in the administration of affairs. The authority of the king is not always obeyed, and it is only of late years that a powerful monarch has attained the nominal government of all the tribes.

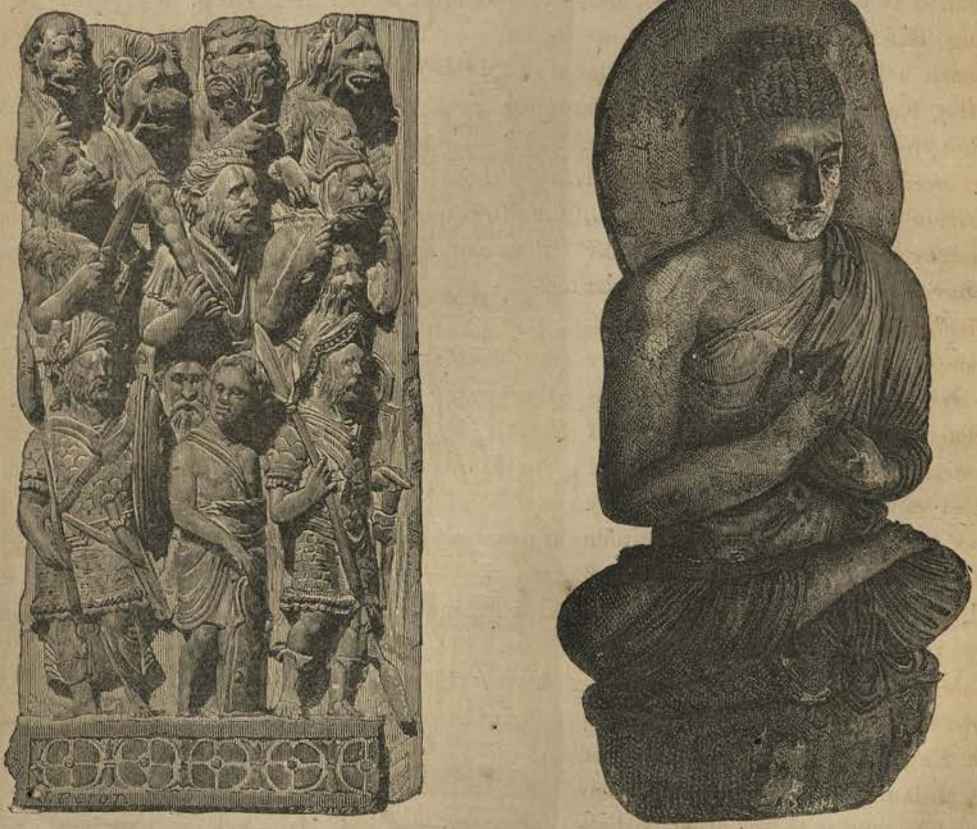
The treatment of their women corresponds to that of other Mohammedan people. They are in towns secluded from the gaze of any but their husband, while in the country they have more liberty. The wives are purchased, and can be divorced at pleasure, but the wife can only sue for relief on very good grounds. A man marries the widow of his deceased brother if she is agreeable, though any departure from this custom is considered a scandal to both parties. If she has children, it is considered becoming on her part to enter into no new alliance. Their marriage-customs resemble those of the Persians. In the country, where the women go unveiled, enterprising lovers may obtain a wife without the mediation of the parents, so necessary in towns where the women are kept secluded. All he has to do is to cut off a lock of her hair, or throw a sheet over her, and proclaim her his affianced bride. If he then offers the father a proper price for her, he will usually have the lady handed over to him; for, after the scene described, no one else will approach her with matrimonial views. If the father refuses, recourse is had to the old expedient of an elopement—a trick of injured lovers, so old-fashioned, indeed, that in one form or another it lies at the basis of all primitive marriage. In a country where women are looked upon as very fragile pieces of property this is considered in the light of an outrage scarcely less serious than murder, and can be expiated only by a humble apology and expensive gifts to the father of the bride thus summarily disposed of.

The women in Afghan towns are far from what they should be, but infidelity cannot be punished except on the evidence of an eye-witness. The result is that death, which is the penalty of this misdemeanour, can be but seldom inflicted. A minor punishment is to tear the woman's veil from her face, shave her head, blacken her face with a mixture of oil and soot, and then to cause her to parade through the bazaars and streets of the town, mounted on a donkey, with her face to the tail, amid the jeers of the multitude, and abuse so abominably foul upon herself, her maternal relatives, her "burnt fathers," and all her connections, past, present, and future, that only the mouths of Orientals could belch it forth. Death to both guilty parties is the law, but the husband has the power of slaying the offender with his own hand; indeed, this is looked upon as a meritorious deed. The men are very neglectful of their wives, indulging in the lowest vices, and passing a great portion of their time at a *hujra* or at a mosque. These *hujras* are bound to provide a night's food and lodging for every stray traveller, and the profits of the proprietors are made out of the visitors, who resort to smoke, drink coffee, eat, and listen to the news. In the *masjid,* or mosque, gossip only is allowed.

Among some tribes the contracting parties live entirely apart until after marriage. In others, the husband must enter the service of his prospective father-in-law, and, like Jacob, earn his wife by years of toil, though, unlike the patriarch, without the consolation of ever during this period seeing his Rachel. Lastly, the custom of some tribes allows to the young people a degree of familiarity, which in the interest of good manners is not to be commended: it goes to the opposite extreme. In the country, the only restraint on the women is, that a man is expected to cover his face if he meets a woman with whom he is not well acquainted; otherwise their condition is much the same as among the Persians and other Asiatic Mohammedans. Few men have more than two wives and two concubines, and the poorer classes content themselves with one wife.

Learning is at a low stage amongst them. The children of the poor receive the rudiments of education from a mollah. This consists in learning to read the Koran and repeat certain prayers. Few, however, can read well, and most are unable to write. The middle-class people send their children to the village or camp schoolmaster, for whom a liberal profession is made in the shape of an allotment of public land, and a small contribution from each scholar. The rich people keep private tutors for their children. Those intended for a learned profession go to some seat of learning—generally Peshawur—where they get instilled into them a certain amount of theology, logic, or law. Rude poetry flourishes amongst the Afghans, but polite letters are not their forte. The Punktú is mainly a spoken, not a written language, and few books exist in it; most of the literature is in the Persian language, and a knowledge of it is confined to the priesthood and the wealthier classes. All correspondence, business transactions, and the work of government, is carried on in the same tongue. The books in Punktú are chiefly theological treatises, romances, or history, but have a very limited circulation. Surgery, as a science, scarcely exists amongst them; and the medical doctrines of even the most learned "hakim" are only a confused jumble of the systems taught by Hippocrates, Aristotle, and Galen. Geography they know little about. Their only idea of Europe, or "Farangistan," is that it is the country of the "Farangees," a white-faced, pig-eating race of infidels, "who are very fond of fighting, drinking, and appropriating other people's countries." The only real Farangees are the British: other nations they know nothing about, except that they have vague glimmerings of the Russians and French as being a sort of half-bred Farangees.

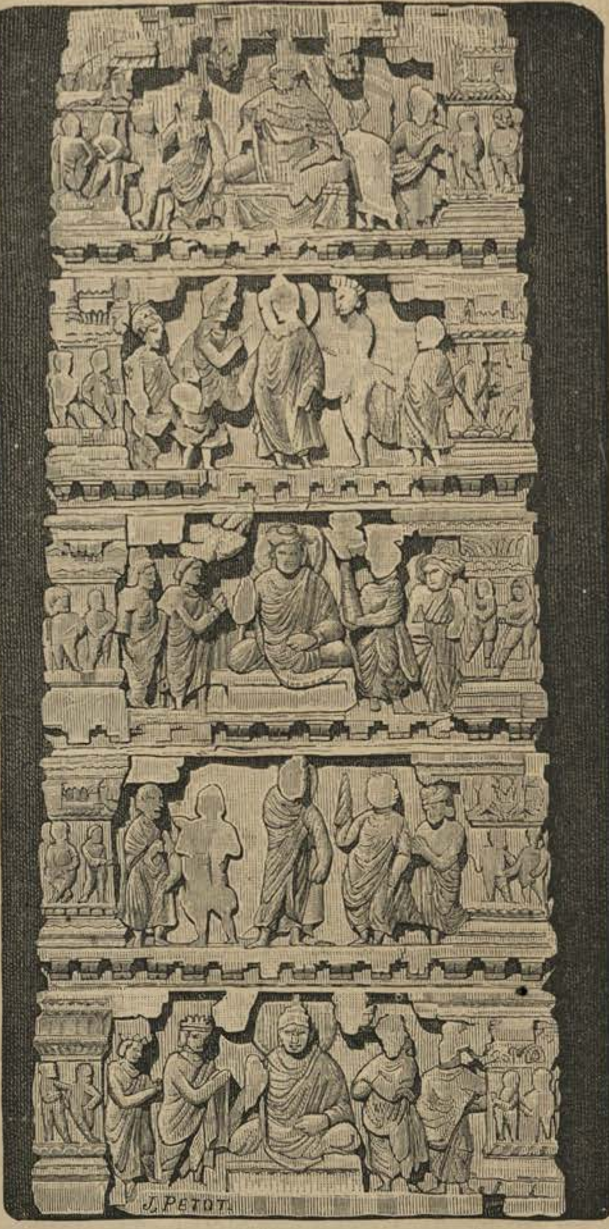
In religion the Afghans all belong to the Sonnee sect of Moslems, but are very tolerant of other religions, allowing even Hindoos, on the payment of a small tax, to remain unmolested in the country. Sheeahs (p. 247) are much more disliked than even Christians, a seeming paradox, which the student of human nature, as developed in religious books, will have no difficulty in unravelling. Bloodshed is often the end of the quarrels among the rival sections of the co-religionists. There are many Persians in the country, some holding high offices, and accordingly Suffeeism (p. 247) flourishes among them, and notwithstanding the denunciations of the mollahs, is gaining ground. It is even whispered that sceptics, in the shape of the followers of the mollah Zucka, who taught that all revelation was nonsense, that the prophets were imposters, and that the questions of the existence of a God and of a future were fair subjects for a philosophical discussion, are found among the nobles; and that even the complacent doctrines of Sheik Bayazeed Ansauree, who taught that the Divinity manifested himself in the person of the said Sheik and other equally holy men, and that all who believed



BAS-RELIEFS (MUSEUM OF PESHAWUR).

the contrary were dead, and, logically, that being so, their property ought to be divided among himself and his followers, as the only survivors of this general logical death, find followers among the seats of learning in Peshawur. But no doubt these are only attempts on the part of the unlettered to throw discredit on the orthodoxy of scientific men: the trick is not extinct!

Though proud of their devotion to the Mohammedan faith, since their conversion to it twelve centuries ago, and willing, like the Jews of old, to stone to death a blasphemer or an apostate (as the Koran commands), yet their conduct by no means does credit to their creed. They will act directly in opposition to the tenets of their faith, if thereby they can attain any object they have got in view. The facts that "Suffeeism," or philosophical infidelity, flourishes, and that many of them are pure Deists, show either that their intelligence is greater than the weight of superstition which they have burdened themselves with, or that they are a very insincere set of hypocrites. Gratitude seems to have no place in their moral creed, or fanaticism seems to conceal every trace of it. They are quite capable, according to their own chiefs, of with one hand taking the medicines of an English physician, who, out of pure philanthropy, is relieving their complaints, and with the other putting a knife into him, and thereby performing a deed which will secure them a place in Paradise. Immorality of the most abominable description prevails amongst them to an extent even more fearful than in other Mohammedan countries, and without even the concealment and shame which usually attend it elsewhere. Murders are of daily occurrence, and little thought of. Burglary is an every-night incident, and there is said to be scarcely a family without a spike-like instrument with which to bore through the mud walls of their neighbour's house. Yet withal it is considered most dishonourable *to be caught*. A story is



BAS-RELIEF (MUSEUM OF PESHAWUR).

told of a family who went on one of these burglarious expeditions. The hole was bored in the wall, and one of the sons was escaping with the plunder, when he was caught inside (by one of the aroused inmates) by his legs. Another minute and his identity would have been discovered, when, at his own earnest request, his father and brother cut off his head, and, escaping with it, saved the "honour" of the family by rendering it impossible to say who the decapitated robber was!

Superstition flourishes among the Afghans in the shape of a firm belief in alchemy, magic, the power of philtres, charms, the credence to be placed in dreams, the existence of ghosts and genii, the "evil eye," &c., and above all in the abject manner in which they allow themselves to be controlled and nose-led by the priests. Of the latter nothing more need be said, except that the Afghanistanee mollah is no better than his brother in Persia.

Ascetics and holy persons are held in great respect. Their tombs are visited by pilgrims, and are looked upon as places of refuge to which the criminal can flee, and remain with impunity until the avenger of blood passes by. Though the blood of the hare is drunk by some of the tribes (unclean beast as it is, according to the Koran) as a strengthener of "the wind," it is viewed with superstition by them, an idea widely entertained by fishermen in the Shetland Isles, and other portions of Scotland, and elsewhere. The dried shoulder-blade of a sheep is a favourite subject by which to read the augury of the future. The same custom prevails among the Mongols, Tungus of Siberia, and the Laps.*

Hospitality is greatly respected. No man will injure his worst enemy so long as he is under his roof. The villagers along the line of travel throughout the country are compelled to keep passing travellers free of charge; but such a tax has this been felt to be, that in some districts they have built their villages at a distance from the road, hoping thereby to escape the burdensome impost which the laws of hospitality and of their country have imposed on them. Indeed, so incongruous a mixture of sympathy and indifference, generosity and rapacity, enter into the composition of the Afghan mind, that Mr. Elphinstone asserts, and he is confirmed by other writers, that an Afghan, who would plunder a traveller of his cloak if he had one, would give him a cloak if he had none. He bears high evidence in favour of one side of their character. "I know no people in Asia," writes this celebrated Indian statesman, "who have fewer vices, or are less voluptuous or debauched [in which statement he is not borne out by more recent writers]. . . . Their vices are revenge, envy, avarice, rapacity, and obstinacy; on the other hand, they are fond of liberty, faithful to their friends, kind to their dependents, hospitable, brave, hardy, frugal, laborious, and prudent; and they are less disposed than the nations in their neighbourhood to falsehood, intrigue, and deceit." They are a sociable people, delighting in dinner-parties, where much boiled mutton, and broth seasoned with salt and pepper, and in which their bread is soaked, are consumed. After this story-telling and the singing of love songs come as a dessert. Hunting, falconry, and dancing rank among their more active favourite amusements. In falconry they are very skilful. The birds are trained to strike at all sorts of game, pheasants, waterfowl, bustard, partridge, quail, &c., and even at the ravine deer, on whose horns they perch, and by the flapping of their wings impede the course of the animal until the hounds are able to overtake it.

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* Klemm, "*Allgemeine Culturgeschichte der Menscheit*," vol. iii, pp. 109, 199, 200.

The different tribes differ somewhat in their dress, but the truly national dress may be described as consisting of a pair of "loose trousers of dark cotton stuff, a large sheet like a wagoner's frock reaching a little below the knees, a low cap (the 'pagri' or turban), resembling that of a hulan, the sides being of black silk or satin, and the top of some sort of brocade. The feet are covered with a pair of half boots that lace up to the calf (like a pair of navvie's boots),* and over all is thrown (if the season is winter) a cloak of well-tanned sheep-skin with the wool inside, or of soft grey (camel's hair) felt. The women wear a shirt like that of the men, but much longer, and made of finer materials, generally coloured or embroidered with flowers in silk. They have coloured trousers, tighter than those of the other sex, and a small cap of bright coloured silk, embroidered with gold thread, which comes down to the forehead or ears, and a large sheet, either of plain or printed cotton, which they throw over their faces when a stranger approaches. In the west the females often tie a black handkerchief over their caps (a Persian fashion). They divide the hair on the brow, and plait it into two locks which fasten behind. Their ornaments are strings of Venetian sequins worn round their heads, and chains of gold or silver, which are hooked up, and end in two large balls hanging down on either side. Earrings and finger rings are worn, as are pendants in the middle cartilage of the nose. Such is the common dress of either sex; but it is subject to infinite variety, as it happens to be influenced by foreign intercourse, or difference of fashion in particular tribes. In towns, the fashions approach those of Persia or India, according to the proximity of the one or other country." Some of the men shave the entire scalp, while the majority, especially the nomads, allow the hair to grow naturally, and only clip it when it gets inconveniently long. They sometimes dye their hands with "henna" (leaves of *Lawsonia inermis*), and apply powdered antimony and lamp-black to the edges of the eyelids. The women, however, more frequently practise these adornments, and it is only the more foppish of the men, who live in cities, who thus beautify themselves. The women also tattoo a little with indigo on the chin and forehead, and occasionally between the breasts, and in the form of rings on the fingers, arms, and wrists. The women are generally handsome, but, like the men, have a Jewish cast of countenance.

The nomad tribes cultivate little or no soil, and rarely visit towns, except at certain seasons for the sale of the produce of their flocks, such as wool, skins, camel's hair, cheese, &c., in return for which they take home with them, for their own use, corn, cash, salt, small quantities of rice and spice, and a coarse cloth called "karbas." No occupation is open to the better class of Afghan, even when settled in a community, except that of a soldier and an agriculturist. None but the very poorest, strange to say, will engage in any mechanical trade or handicraft, or become a retail dealer. A few are merchants, but they always engage a Persian or Hindoo to transact the details of their business for them. This curious trait in Afghan character is due either to pride, independence, or to laziness, or perhaps to a mixture of all three. Thousands, nevertheless, are actually engaged in trade, but they are merely the carriers of the goods for the Persian and Hindoo capitalists, who are the principals.

They are a handsome, athletic,† muscular race, capable of great endurance, but vain, and bigoted in religion and political matters; revengeful, avaricious, and penurious in the extreme; deceitful, and as a rule wanting in the qualities of prolonged courage and perseverance. Yet their affable and apparently hospitable manner is apt to disarm the unwary, and deceive him as to their true character, which is that of a nation of robbers, always ready to offer shelter to the stranger within their gates, and to plunder him the moment he is outside of them; as quarrelsome among themselves as with foreigners, and constantly intriguing and distrustful of each other. All of them are fond of home, and anxious to be buried with their fathers: hence the art of embalming is carried to a high state of perfection amongst them. If the whole body cannot be taken home, a few of the bones are.

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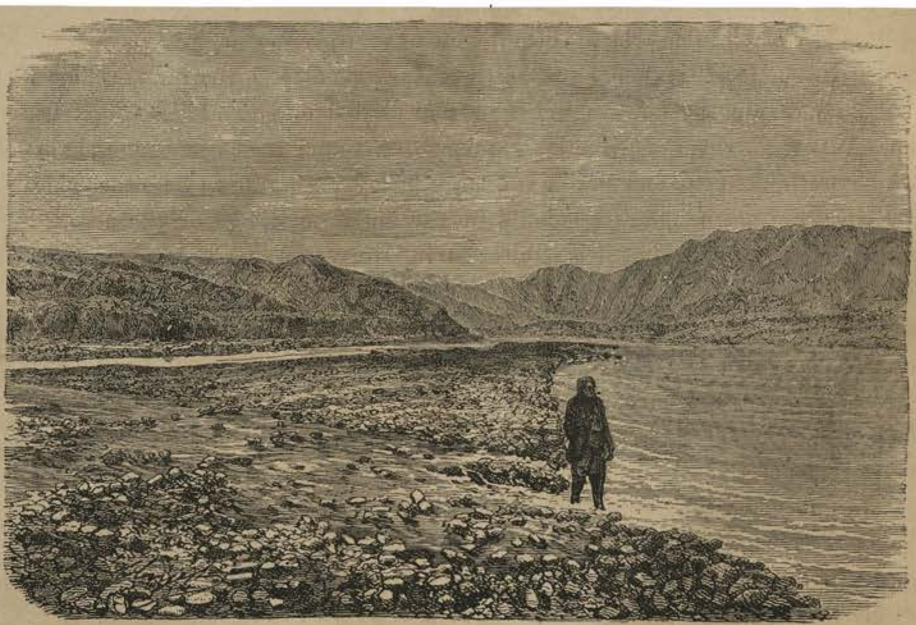
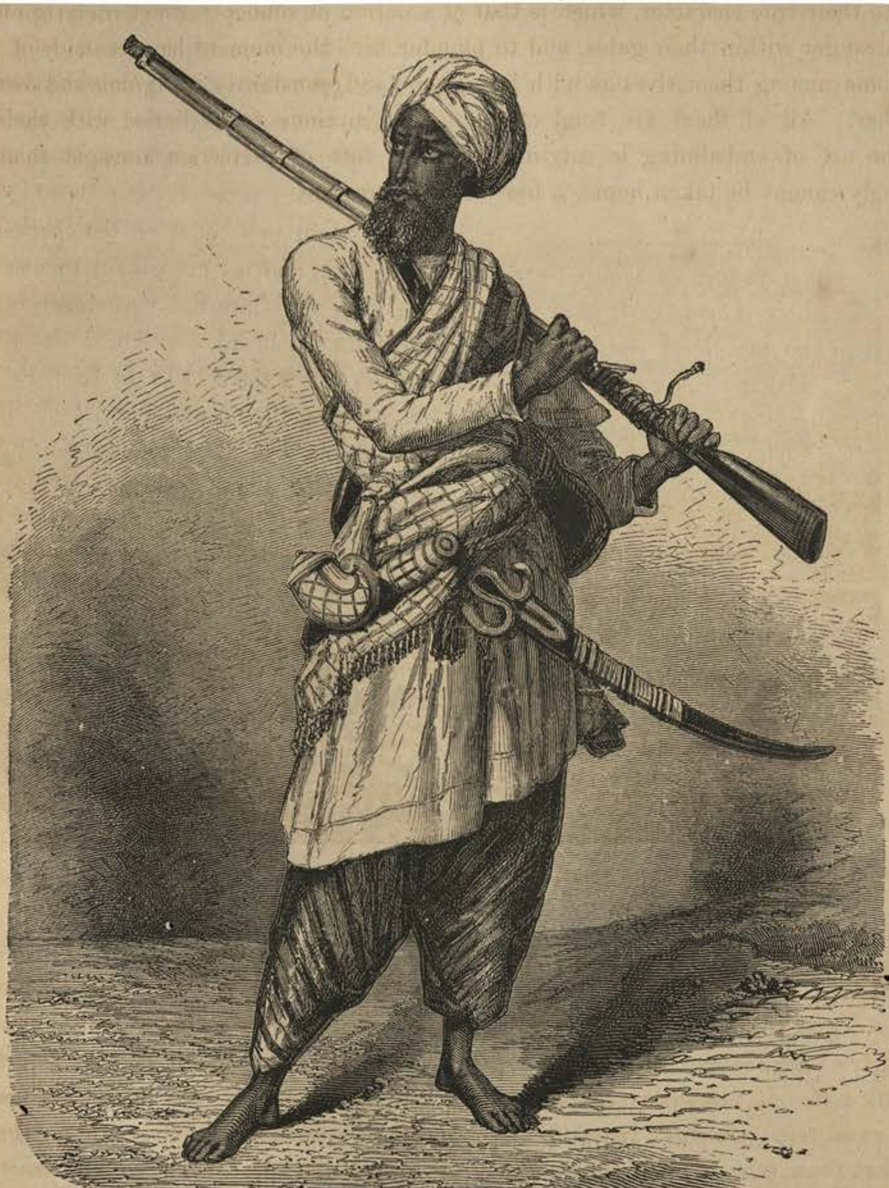
* Or the native "paizar" turned up and pointed at the toe, and studded on the sole with broad-headed nails.

† According to Mr. Bellew, few men are below five feet six inches, and only three men whom he measured were six feet high. He met none above that height.



THE RIVER SWAT, A TRIBUTARY OF THE CABUL, AFGHANISTAN.

They fare well. The poor live chiefly on bread and vegetables cooked in the form of a pottage, with dried pulse or raisins; mutton, goats, buffalo, or camel's flesh, or fowl. Fat is freely used when rancid to a degree which would make it unbearable to any stomach but that of an Afghan or Tartar. Milk and fruit are also common articles of diet. The richer people live still better; tea is used freely, but coffee is unknown except as a medicine. Tobacco is used by all classes, and the resinous exudation (churrus) from the hemp plant is sometimes employed to produce intoxication; but those who indulge in this habit are looked upon as disreputable characters. The better classes, however, in defiance of the Koran, drink spirits in secret for no other purpose than to produce intoxication; and, when under the influence of these potations, will commit the most disgusting crimes and vices. These displays are, however, not of frequent occurrence. Cleanliness, both in their persons and houses, is disregarded. Hence epidemic diseases are very deadly when they attack a community. With the exception of the "Kanats," or underground tunnels from well to well, with a view to prevent the evaporation of the water, they have scarcely any public works. If we add that a common way for the governor of a city or province to raise a revenue is to call in all the coin of a particular denomination at a reduced value, and then to issue it a few weeks afterwards at the full valuation, we need say nothing more. This brilliant piece of political economy was, in 1857-8, repeated five times in fifteen months!



SOLDIER OF THE HAZARAH MOUNTAINS.

We have sketched the *general* characteristics of the Afghan people. But they are divided into numerous tribes; all, according to their traditions, descended from the four sons of Kyse, Kesh, or Kais Abdooresheed, a mythical personage whose name figures in all their genealogies, and whom they pretend was the father of the Israelitish King Saul. The four primary stocks were, in accordance with the tale, Serrabun, Ghorghoost, Betnee, and Kurleh; but in the multiplicity of the subdivisions into which the original tribes have ramified, these primary ones have been quite lost sight of. To even name all these tribes would be a tedious and useless task. Accordingly, we shall simply follow Messrs. Elphinstone and Bellew, in giving a few peculiarities which distinguish the most remarkable of the many Afghan clans.

The *Western Afghans*, or Durani, are a more pastoral people than those of the eastern part of the country, though neither are exclusively agriculturists nor shepherds. Many tracts are in a state of high cultivation, though the majority of the people live in tents, and move about from place to place, seeking pasturage for their herds. There are nine of these Durani sub-tribes. The people of this division are stout and well made, and in most of them the cheek-bones are prominent. The young men clip the beard into shape, and all are careful to encourage its growth. The hair is usually dressed with care. Long curls are not uncommon, but a stripe shaven down the middle of the head, and thus forming a broad division, is the mode most in vogue. The shepherds are less careful, and often allow their locks to hang to their full length, presenting a wild, shaggy aspect, and heightening the natural ferocity of these hardy mountaineers. The matchlock is their ordinary weapon, but except danger is apprehended, they rarely go armed. And here it may be remarked that the Afghan relies more upon the knife than on any other weapon, and is really poorly armed. On long journeys they go prepared for feud. Tribe is frequently at war against tribe among the Eastern Afghans, but among the more wandering races of the west these family differences are much rarer. The women are more independent, and occupy a position more in equality with that of the men, than among most Moslems. The men take a wife when about eighteen or twenty, while the women are married between sixteen and eighteen. They are a merry people, and when the labours of the day are over, the national dance—called Attum—is tripped; and song and story diversify the evening's amusements. All of the Durani—one tribe alone forming an exception—are religious, but not intolerant. Many of the higher classes are familiar with Persian poetry and light literature, but few of the poorer classes can read. With the Durani there is no place like home; in his eyes the holy city of Candahar is the centre of all the earth. Here his great men are buried, and here, though little of a traveller as a rule, if he chances to die away from home, he desires his body to be carried, so that his dust may mingle with that of his kindred and clansmen. Hospitable, generous, and brave, the Durani bear a high name all over Afghanistan, and even their enemies will allow them to be possessed of many virtues.

One of these tribes—the Atchikzye,*—numbering about 5,000, does not, however, bear out the good name of the Western Afghans. Keepers of herds of sheep and camels, they wear their beards long and unclipped, and their clothes unchanged for years; are quarrelsome, inhospitable, irreligious—without mosques or mollahs—and, to add to all their other bad qualities, are notorious as robbers. The Durani are somewhat unwilling to own them as kinsmen, but they admit their courage.

The *Ghilzye* rank next to the Durani in reputation. They are divided into eight tribes, and an association, called the Shirpan, made out of members of the other eight. Each of these tribes are again subdivided. For instance, the Soliman-Khiel (or tribe)—by far the largest of the Ghilzye divisions—is composed of three sub-tribes, numbering from 30,000 to 35,000 families.

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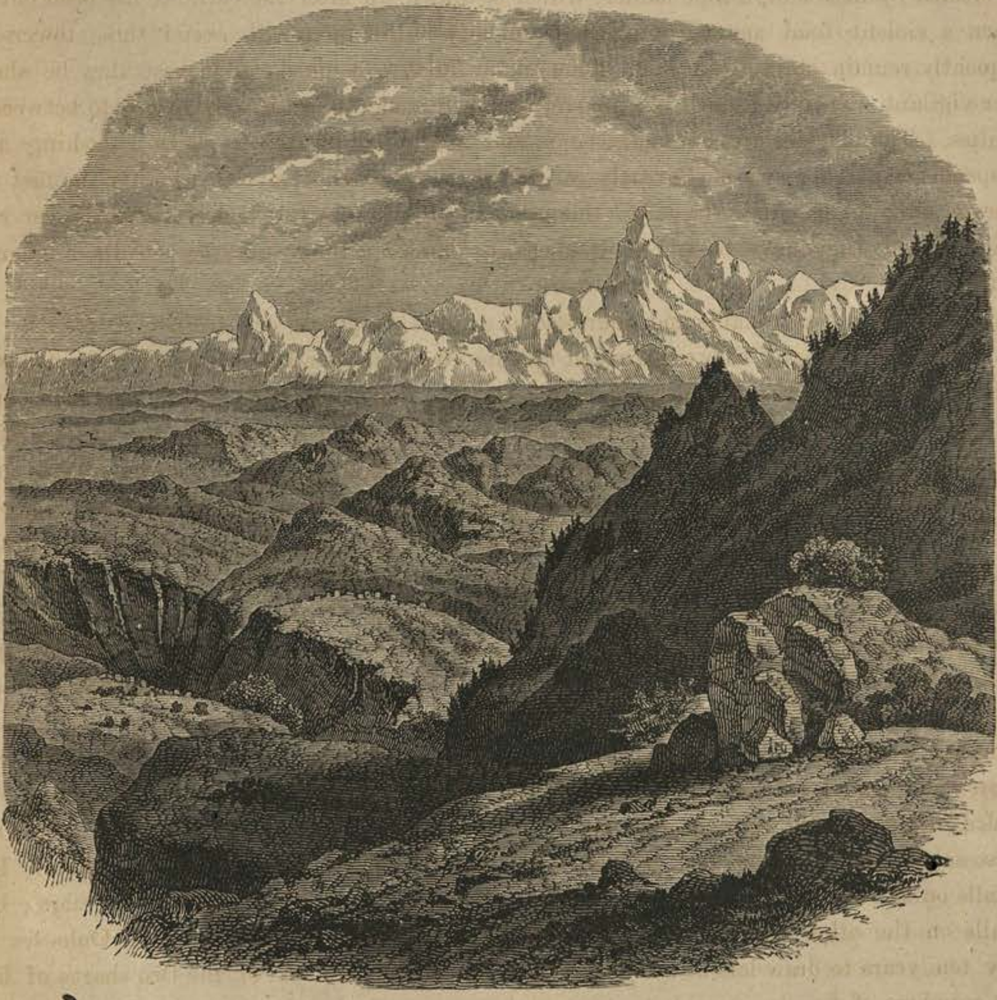
* The termination *zye* (pronounced *zehee*), in which so many of the Afghan tribes end, is equivalent to the Celtic *vich*, *mac*, or *O'*, or the Arab *ben*, and means sons. Thus Atchikzye are the sons of Atchik, and so on.

The Ghilzye do not differ much from the Durani. The distinction is more a political one. They are lightly ruled, and their constitution is more democratic in its character than that of the Eastern Afghans.

The *Berdurani*, or North-Eastern Afghans, are also divided into numerous tribes, some of whom are British subjects. The most notorious of these are the Kyberis, of the famous Kyber Pass, where, in 1842, a British army, numbering, with camp followers, about 16,500, was exterminated by these and other tribes (the Ghilzyes in particular), only one man—the late Dr. Brydon—escaping to tell the tale. Of their three subdivisions, the Afridis are of the most political importance, from their numbers, and from the fact that they are custodians of several important mountain passes. The road between the British districts of Peshawur and Kohat—running through the Kohat and Gulli or Jewaki—passes in their country. These passes have been the causes of quarrel between the Alfridi sub-tribes themselves, several of whom—though small in numbers—are, from their position in a little accessible country, practically independent. The tribes inhabiting the Kyber Pass—a rugged, tortuous, narrow glen, twenty-five miles long, and enclosed on every side by precipitous and perpendicular walls of rock—levy black mail on all who venture through it; in fact, even the addition of a Kyber escort will sometimes be powerless to insure the traveller passing safely through this den of freebooters. In physiognomy they are not unlike the Kurds, viz., lean, muscular, dark-skinned, and with prominent cheek-bones, and high noses. Terraced houses—(a style of architecture very common in Afghanistan)—are to be found in the valleys; while the mountaineers live in movable huts, or, like the fabled Troglodytes, and the ancient cave-dwellers, in excavations in the rock. They dress in a dark blue tunic, a dark turban, and straw sandals; and arm themselves with a short spear, a sword, and a matchlock, with a wooden fork to rest it on. Brave, warlike, and good marksmen, they make excellent soldiers, if the temptation to plunder be not thrown in their way. In this case, so inveterate are their freebooting propensities, that they will not hesitate, in default of more legitimate prey, to fall upon the baggage of the army to which they are attached, should they find it unguarded. Since the establishment of British authority in their proximity (at Peshawur), the Afridis of the Kohat Pass have been forced to somewhat restrain their lawless propensities; but still the pass, though tolerably safe for travellers in ordinary times, is entirely closed when the tribes are "up," and until terms have been made with the British authorities, the direct communication between the military stations of Peshawur and Kohat becomes, for the time being, cut off. "Indeed," writes Mr. Bellew, "the quarrelsome character of this people and the constant strife that they lead, is declared by a mere glance at their villages and fields, which bristle in all directions with round towers. These are constantly occupied by men at enmity with their neighbours in the same or adjoining villages; who, perched up in their little shooting-boxes, watch the opportunity of putting a bullet into each other's bodies with the most persevering patience. The fields even are studded with these round towers, and the men holding them most jealously guard their lands from trespass by any one with whom they are at feud. Nothing belonging to their enemies is safe from their vengeance. If even a fowl or a bullock strays from its owner into the ground, it is sure to receive a bullet from the adversary's tower. So constant are their feuds, that it is a well-known fact that the village children are taught never to walk in the centre of the road, but always, from force of early habit, walk stealthily along under cover of the wall nearest to any tower. And it has even been observed by natives themselves that their cattle, as if by instinct, follow the same example." The shooting-boxes among the Ja-jis—another very troublesome tribe—are entered through an aperture or trapdoor in the floor of the platform on which they are erected by means of a rope ladder, which is drawn up after the entrance has been effected. When a violent feud among families is on hand, the men will ascend these towers, and frequently remain shut up in them for weeks, afraid to come down in case they be shot by their vigilant adversaries, until the quarrel has been made up, or a truce agreed to between the families. The Afridis are fine, handsome, and manly-looking fellows, with a dashing air of independence and ferocity not greatly calculated to assure the traveller who, for the first time, or even after long familiarity, sees them bounding down with wonderful agility over rocks, behind which they have been lying concealed watching the trespassers on their mountain territory.

Still more uncontrollable and quarrelsome are the *Eusof-zye*, or *Children of Joseph*. Like the rest of the Afghans, they are divided up into numerous small communities, governed on the patriarchal system; whilst the reader may remember that the system of rule prevailing among the Durani was essentially feudal. The land system in vogue among the clans of the children of Joseph is remarkable. "Each of the clans," writes Elphinstone, "divided its lands among its kheils at a general meeting of the clan, and the arrangement was repeated throughout all the subordinate divisions. Each of the kheils receives its lands in perpetuity; but a different arrangement was adopted within itself. The lands of each division were allotted only for a certain number of years, and were to be changed at the end of that period for those of some other; so that each might share equally in the fertility or sterility of the soil. Then each independent division of the Khauzoozyes retains the lands assigned to it at the original distribution; but the subdivisions interchange their lands, and in a manner which I shall endeavour to illustrate by the example of the Naikpeekheil, a division of the kheil of Khauzoozye, and clan of Accozye, which is now an independent *Ooloos* [tribe] divided into six clans. The lands of the Naikpeekheil are divided into two parts, equal in extent, but, of course, not exactly equal in fertility; the Ooloos is also subdivided into two parts, which draw lots every ten years for the choice of land. If the lot falls on the half which is already possessed of the best share, it retains its possession; but if it falls on the other half, an immediate exchange takes place. The two half Oolooses meet every ten years to draw lots at a village which lies on the borders of the two shares of lands. Vast numbers of people assemble to witness the ceremony; but, as the exultation of the victor and the anger of the vanquished party would produce tumults in such an assembly, the mulliks put off drawing the lots on various pretences, till the people get impatient and return to their homes. When the crowd is dispersed, the chief of the whole Naikpeekheil draws the lots, and announces the result, which is received in the victorious party with public distributions of charity, firing off of matchlocks, and all other marks of rejoicing. The change of land is accomplished without much trouble or confusion; each clan, of one half Ooloos, is paired with a clan of the other, and the two thus paired cross over into each other's lands. When the lot has determined that the half Oolooses are to retain their former lands, the three clans of each cast lots among themselves for a new distribution of their share, which is divided into three portions. On the last two occasions, when lots were drawn among the Naikpeekheil, the half which had the worst lot was successful each time, and, in consequence, there have been two complete interchanges of land within the last fourteen years. It is impossible not to suppose that the uncertain tenure on which the lands are held under this institution must be a great bar to improvement; but, in spite of this obstacle, the Eusofzye country is cultivated with great industry and success, and the villages, watercourses, and other immovable property, are as good as in most parts of Afghanistan. It might also be expected that there would be a civil war in the Oolooses, as often as the land was to be exchanged; and, in fact, at the expiration of the last term but one, the half of the Naikpeekheil, which was in possession of the best lands, refused to submit to the usual custom of drawing lots. The mulliks of the other half complained loudly of this injustice, and called upon all the other Accozyes (the name of the division) to prevent



THE HINDOO COOSH MOUNTAINS.

the subversion of the ancient custom of the tribe; so many Oolooses declared in their favour, that their opponents were forced to give way, and to draw lots as usual. This custom is called *waish*. It prevails through the whole of the Eusofzyes, and also among the Mohammed-zyes (children of Mohammed). The period for which the lands are to be retained, however, varies throughout. In Boonere, for instance, the waish is performed annually. Among the Jadoons, a branch of the Eusofzyes, individuals interchange among themselves, but there is no waish among the clans. With the Otmankheil, on the contrary, the whole tribe casts lots every twenty years. Among the Gundehpoors, in Daman, also, the lands are divided into six shares, corresponding to the number of the clans in the tribe, and all the clans draw lots for the order in which they are to choose their shares. The period at which this ceremony is to be renewed is not fixed permanently, as among the Eusofzyes, but while one waish is taking place, it is determined in the council of the tribe when the next is to happen; the term is generally from three to five years. What is most surprising is, that all these transactions take place among the lawless Gundehpoors without quarrels or bloodshed. None of the Eastern Afghans, but those already mentioned, and two or three clans of the Oorookzyes, have the custom. There are some traces of its having prevailed among some tribes of Khorassan, but the only remaining instance of its existence that has reached me is among the Baraiches, where village sometimes draws lot with village, or man with man, but without any waish among clans." None of the Afghan tribes are more broken into septs than the Eusofzyes. A saint of their race prophesied that they would always be free, but never united. An English parish beadle, or rural policeman, has more real power than the greatest Eusofzye chief. Blood feuds make every man afraid of his life, from secret enemies or public foes who might be on the watch for him. In every village men may be seen going about in armour, while the richer men go about surrounded by paid guards, numbering—according to the imminence of the vengeance which threatens them, the length of their purses, or the value which they may put upon their lives—from 10 to 100 men. Here is a specimen:—"Anwur Khan, the mullik (chief), of the Ghalleckheil, always sleeps in his hoojra, or public apartment, away from his women, surrounded by his male relations; his servants all sleep around, except four or five, who keep watch; all have their arms ready by them, and if one of them goes beyond the threshold, he must be guarded by four or five armed men." "I have been told," writes the same diplomatist (Mr. Elphinstone), "by Mozirrib Khan (a lad about eighteen years old, the nephew of Anwur Khan), that he has seen several attacks on this apartment by one of the cundies of the same village, but they failed from the alertness of the defendants." The abduction of a woman from one triblet to another is a frequent cause of feud; and as sanctuary is never denied to the unhappy lovers who may elope from one Ooloos to another, the swarthy Helens and Paris's of Afghanistan frequently embroil tribe with tribe. And, as an Afghanistan's "heart burns for his relation killed," this cause may be added to those which more commonly set the *vendetta* at work from tribe to tribe. The whole number of the Eusofzyes may amount to about 700,000, or thereabouts, the "fakirs," semi-serfs,* who are either degraded Afghans or persons who, owing to various circumstances, have fled from other countries, forming fully one-half. Take them as a whole, the Eusofzyes are a gallant race, but are quarrelsome, and proud to a degree, which leads to disputes that blood can alone wipe out. Their morality is worst in the plains, and best in their mountain homes; gambling, bang-eating, and opium-eating, are the vices to which they are most addicted. But no matter how immoral they are—and it might be almost said in a direct ratio to their immorality—they are fanatical Mohammedans, and submissive to the tyrannical decrees of their mollahs. If a Eusofzye becomes impoverished, his clansmen will raise a subscription for him, and he will go off on a pilgrimage to Mecca, or migrate to India, to attempt to repair his shattered fortunes. Accordingly, in the latter country we find settlements of Afghans at various places—Rohillas, for example—where they are mixed with Hindoos. The Turkan or Turkolani, Daman, and the Otmankei are the tribes next in importance to that last named, but our space will not permit us to do more than mention them, and various others of less importance we must pass over altogether. The Baraich, Teríns, Caukers, and Naussers are by some classed as Afghans, but they are not of pure blood, and their claim to be so styled is, to say the least, equivocal. In addition to the true Afghan tribes, various alien people are found scattered over the country; and among these may be mentioned the Tadjik. This name was originally applied by the Tartar conquerors to the Persians (p. 222), and was used in contradistinction to the Toork or warlike people. In Afghanistan it is applied to a people supposed to be the descendants of the ancient Persians, who are believed to have been at one time the possessors of the country, but are now displaced by the conquering race. They also call themselves Pārsīwān, or Pārsīzabān, and speak a language little differing from modern Persian. They are fixed inhabitants, living in houses either as tenants or servants to the lordly Afghans, or in villages by themselves. They compose the greatest part of the population about the Afghanistan cities. In the territories of the King of Cabul it is estimated that they number a million and a half, though Mr. Bellew does not estimate the number in Afghanistan at more than 500,000. Under designation of Tadjik must also be included the inhabitants of Kohistan, the Burrukees, Poormolees, and some other races. The Tadjiks are all Mohammedans of the Sonnee sect, and are a quiet, frugal, and industrious people, absorbed in tilling the soil, and never aspiring to a share in the turbulent government under which they live. Though excessively ignorant and superstitious, Mr. Bellew describes them as being much less turbulent and bigoted than the Afghans. Some of them adopt a military in preference to an agricultural life; numbers are in the Amir's army, and even in the Punjaub force of the British Indian army. These soldiers are called Tōork, a term we have already mentioned, as in contradistinction to tadjik or peasant. The Kazzilbash race is allied to the Tadjik, as being of Persian origin; and though speaking a dialect of the same language, it is different in every other respect. They are Mohammedans of the Sheeah (or Shiite) sect, and are in every way modern Persians, whose settlement in Afghanistan does not date later than 1737, when Nadir Shah established a colony of them in Cabul. They are a handsome, fair-complexioned, and manly people, brave and warlike, but possessed also of the Persian characteristics of polish, combined with cunning, deceit, and venality. Some are soldiers, but most are employed as merchants, physicians, scribes, petty traders, &c. They are found chiefly in large towns, and are considered a better educated and superior class of the population. An Afghan will frequently marry a Kazzilbash girl, but will not in turn marry his daughter to a Kazzilbash, whom he despises as an infidel, owing to his belonging to a rival religious sect. The race numbers about 200,000 in all. The Hazārahs also speak a Persian dialect, but are Tartars (Fig. on p. 265). They are a very poor people, though faithful, docile, and trustworthy. Their stronghold is in the Hazarah mountains, and in their fastnesses they are said to be implacable enemies of the Afghans. Bold to rashness, they are feared by the Afghans, but in the winter they spread themselves into the plains in search of work. The Hindki and Jat are other principal races, not Afghans, inhabiting the country. They speak a dialect of Hindi, and, collectively, number about 600,000. There are also a few Cashmeris and Armenians settled at Cabul. The chief cities of Afghanistan are Candahar, Ghizni, and Cabul, all more or less rich and prosperous, the first-named being famous in Eastern song and story. In addition to the Afghans—true and dubious—and the immigrant races mentioned, there are also in Afghanistan various petty tribes, the origin and relations of which cannot easily be made out. They chiefly inhabit the highlands of Cabul, and accordingly very little is known of them. "They mix," writes Mr. Bellew, "little with the peoples they dwell amongst; many of them wander about the hills with their flocks, on the produce of which they support themselves; some have fixed abodes, and cultivate the soil; and a portion are found in the ranks of the Afghan army, or in the service of the chiefs of the country, either as henchmen, shepherds, or farm servants. These tribes speak dialects differing more or less from each other, and peculiar to themselves; and they also differ from each other and their neighbours in several of their customs and tribal observances. They profess to be Mussulmans, but they are excessively ignorant of the precepts and doctrines of Islam, and very lax in the observance of the ordinances. Of these tribes the Nīmcha race are, without doubt, 'Kafirs' who have been converted to Mohammedanism. The others, also, are in all probability converted Hindoos, and perhaps the descendants of the original inhabitants of the country previous to the arrival of the Afghans. All these tribes, viz., the Nīmcha, Deggānī, Lughmānī, Sādū, Kawāl, Kābuti, &c., may collectively number perhaps 150,000 souls."

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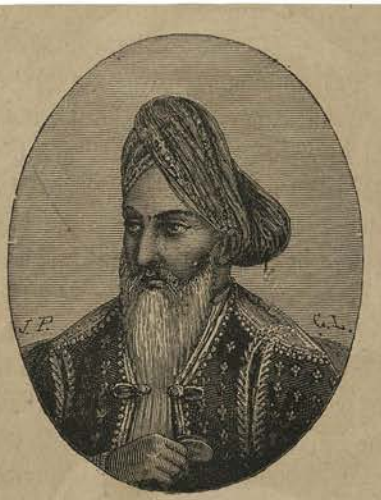
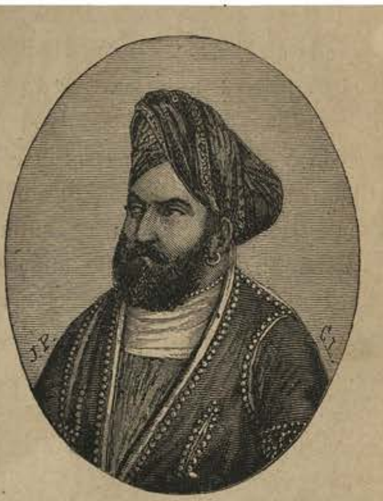
* The term is here used in a different signification to that understood by it in India.

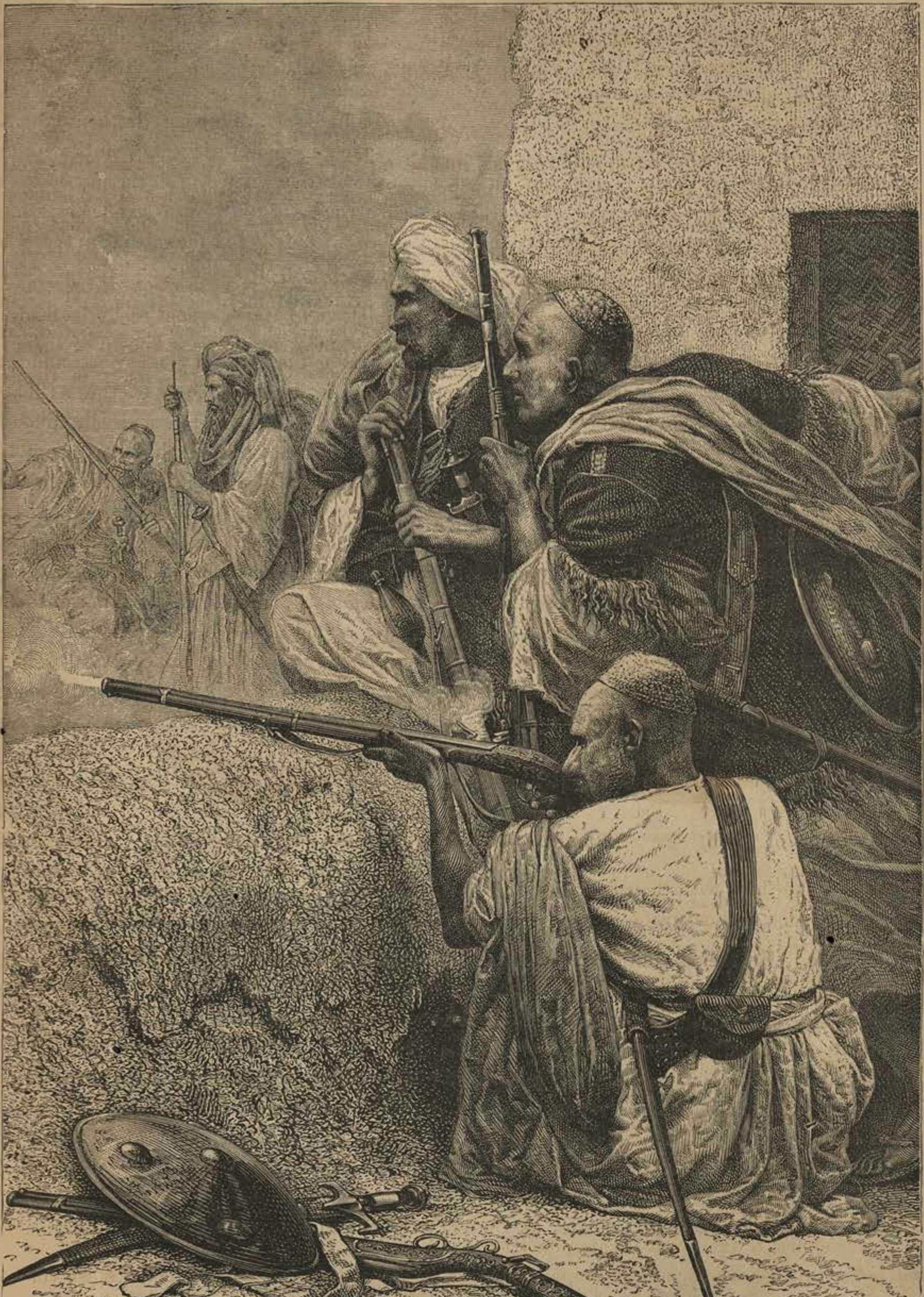


DOST MOHAMMED KHAN.



AKBAR, ONE OF HIS SONS.

In reference to the much debated question of the origin of the Afghans, much might be said, but with a result in no way in keeping with the words expended. Though they despise the Jews as the worst of heretics, and are themselves apostates, even by their own account, from



MOUNTAINEERS FIRING ON THE ENGLISH TROOPS.

their ancient religion, they are very proud to trace their descent from the Hebrews, and to call themselves "Banī Israeli"—children of Israel. Though greatly mixed up with foreign adulterations, they have traditionary accounts of the exodus from Egypt under Musā or Moses, the wars of the Jews with the Philistines, Amalakites, Anakims, and other heathen races of Palestine, of the ark and its wanderings, &c.; all of which agree in their main points with the Scripture account of the early doings of the Israelites until they entered upon the possession of the Promised Land. They even pretend to give an account of their own wanderings from Palestine until they came into Afghanistan; and despise other tribes in the same country, who, though agreeing in language, appearance, and customs, they call Pathāns, and declare them not of the same honourable lineage with themselves. It cannot be denied that it is peculiar that a people so despised by the Afghans, as well as by all surrounding nations who have adopted the Mohammedan faith, should have been selected as the national progenitors, and that their claims are apparently borne out by not only the Jewish physiognomy of the Afghans, their traditions of Hebrew history as known to every village mollah, and recorded voluminously in their books, but also by those moral and mental characteristics which have given the Afghans in modern as they gave the Jews in ancient times, the reputation of being a stiff-necked, rebellious, and degenerate generation. Mr. Bellew,* and other writers on Afghanistan, have given numerous examples of the similarity of the Hebrew and Afghan customs. But while acknowledging that there may be "something in it," it must not be forgotten that a corresponding likeness could be shown to exist in the habits and rites of other nations—the North American Indians, for example—and that many of the rites which have been pointed out as common to the Afghans and the Jews are the common property of most Oriental peoples.

After being under the rule or contended for by Arab, Tartar, and Hindoo, and the source of war with all these powers, as well as with the British on more than one occasion, Afghanistan again was at peace under a monarch of her own race. This was the famous—or the infamous, according to the light he is looked on—Dost Mohammed Khan, who conducted operations against the British in 1840-43, and again joined the Sikhs against us. In the latter years of his life he might almost be said to be in the pay of the Indian Government—receiving large subsidies and presents of arms, with a view to repel the Persians in the war of 1856—and seemed to be convinced that the British intended to limit their conquests by the Indus, and that his best interest was to keep at peace with the "Farangees," infidels though they were. Far-seeing politicians began to think that Afghanistan might in the future be the only opposing barrier between India and the earth-hunger of Russia, and that, so far as it was possible for its monarch to restrain his turbulent and ungovernable subjects, it was equally to our interest to cultivate the friendship of both. In 1863, bowed down with years, cares, and infirmities, Dost Mohammed died, and, contrary to all expectation, though in accordance with a common practice of Oriental sovereigns, with whom primogeniture has little influence, appointed his third and favourite son, Shere Ali, Amir (or King) of Afghanistan. Dost Mohammed had consolidated the Afghan kingdom by assassinating one after another the powerful tribal chiefs against whom he might otherwise have had to contend. He, however, left behind him sixteen sons to take the place of the foes to the crown whom in his youth he had so summarily removed from the scene of action. No sooner had Shere Ali claimed the throne of his dead father, than the two elder sons contested it with him; the other brothers taking the side of whichever party they thought had the best chance of winning. Then civil war raged. However, chiefly by the bravery and ability of his second son, Yakoob Khan, governor of Herat,* Shere Ali was at the end of five years successful in keeping his seat on the throne of Afghanistan. Gratitude is not, however, the redeeming point in Afghanistee character. Accordingly, Shere Ali soon imitated the example of his father, but without the excuse which he had in nominating as his heir, not the eldest, who by right might have expected the throne, though an utter incapable, nor the second, who had done such knightly service in his behalf, and had shown himself so loyally brave, but Abdoola, the favourite son of his favourite wife. Fearful that after his death Yakoob's ability and popularity in the kingdom might prove dangerous to his successor on the throne, no sooner had Shere Ali found his seat secure, than he began to cripple Yakoob in every way in his power, by depriving him of his offices, and by other ungenerous acts which the cunning and power of an Eastern despot can devise and execute. The result was that Yakoob rebelled; but before matters had gone far the rupture was, mainly through the instrumentality of the late Earl Mayo, then Governor-General of India, patched up, and he was again (in 1871) installed in his government of Herat. The cordiality between Cabul and Herat was, however, but slight, and not improved on Shere Ali taking the decided step of officially declaring Abdoola his heir. The last news is, that persuaded to visit Cabul on the promise that the question of the succession would be considered, Yakoob Khan has been treacherously thrown into prison by his father. If the Amir, unmindful of how his father, by a similar course of action, brought the kingdom almost to the verge of ruin, persists in his unwise course, the consequences may be serious, especially if the chiefs, who are attached to Yakoob, should take up arms—as they are almost certain to do—in his behalf. The murders, treacheries, harem intrigues, and civil broils which make up the history of Central Asia, seem likely to have another episode added to it. Civil war, which has so often desolated Afghanistan, may again tear that unhappy kingdom to pieces, unless the order of succession decreed is revoked. If Yakoob Khan is disposed of by poison or otherwise, his friends are not likely to let the matter drop; if he is freed without his rights being restored, he may allow the crown to remain in peace as long as it is on his father's head, but on his death the fratricidal struggle will assuredly commence. All these contingencies avoided, there is another claimant for the throne of Afghanistan. In Bokhara—it is more than suspected, under Russian protection and countenance—lives Abdool Ruhman, son of Shere Ali's eldest brother, who is ready at the first opportunity to assert his claim to the throne. Civil war seems therefore inevitable; and in any case Abdoola will have to fight for his crown as his grandfather and father had to do before him. The struggle is only postponed, and it can only be hoped that when it does come our Indian Government, which is inclined to make Afghanistan a policeman who is to keep a potent eye over the pilfering Muscovite, may not be led to interpose, and share the proverbial fate of those who interfere in civil broils.†

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* "Journal of a Political Mission to Afghanistan in 1857," p. 46 *et seq.*

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* It may be remembered that it was this Yakoob Khan—then a mere boy—whose acuteness penetrated the disguise of M. Vamberey, when that celebrated traveller visited him in 1863, avowedly as a Dervish making a pilgrimage to the holy places of Central Asia.

† The last news (May 17th, 1875) is that after a series of skirmishes, Shere Ali has crushed his son's adherents, and that Yakoob Khan himself having failed to make his escape is to be imprisoned for life.

PAROPAMISANS.

We have now to speak briefly—briefly, because our space is limited, and our knowledge still more so—of certain tribes or nationalities, whose homes are in the valleys, and, speaking vaguely, about the mountains known as the Hindoo Coosh Range. It was in this region that lay the country known to the ancients as Paropamisus;* hence Dr. Latham classes the tribes referred to under the general heading of Paropamisans. Their chief order may be said to be "the parts between the southern slope of the Hindoo Coosh, and either the main stream of the Indus itself, or that of its feeder, the Cabul river." To these drainages the group is by no means confined; for on the water system of the Oxus, on the Yarkand river, and it is possible even on the Amoor, members belonging to it may be found. All are mountaineers, and some of them are actual pagans or Kafirs (*i.e.*, infidels), or imperfect converts to Mohammedanism. Perhaps there are no people in regard to whom we are less acquainted. Of most of them and their country we have only the vaguest accounts, and accordingly it may be discovered that some of the people who are provisionally classed under this head will be found to be Tadjiks, or other nationalities. What is known about them is mainly derived from native sources, not in every case to be greatly depended on. Having been thus put into possession of information as to the sources whence our knowledge flows, the reader must not be surprised if the character of it savours now and then of the fountain head.

Our knowledge of the *Therba* or Thur, and *Shuli* or Shu tribes is derived from the notes of General Gardiner,† and brief though they are, we have nothing else to draw upon. The people he describes live E. or N.E. of Bamían, where they are the aborigines, though the Kalzubi Turkomans have intruded themselves into the country. They are idolaters, and in a cave are contained images of Moh and his wife Mábún, their chief deities, whom even the Mohammedans of the district reverence. No one presumes to enter the cave with his shoes on. They reckon by months rather than by years, and at each new moon make a fire-offering to Zhei, the god of fire. Other caves are dedicated to Sheh (the destroyer), Hersh, and Maul. By Moh the earth was created, by Mábún the wilderness, and from them sprang the race of giants. They slept, each by turns, for 999 moons, and reigned for 450,000, and after this their sons Zhei, Maul (the earth-quaker), and Sheh rebelled against them. "By their combined efforts Moh was buried beneath the mountains. Confusion lasted 5,000 moons, after which the three victors each returned to his own region for 10,000 moons. Maul was lost in darkness of his own creating, Sheh fled with his family towards the sun, which so much enraged Zhei that he caused fire to spread over the earth. This was quenched by the spirit of Mábún, but not till the whole giant race was destroyed, and the earth remained a desert for 3,000 moons. Then Hersh and Lethram, originally slaves of Moh, and great magicians, emerged from the north and settled in these mountains. By some Lethram is considered as the incarnate spirit of Mábún, and the queen to whom Hersh was vizier. Hersh had three sons, Uz, Muz, and All.‡ These he left in charge of all their families, while with a large army he travelled towards the sun in pursuit of Sheh, who was supposed to be still living. So the three sons of Hersh and their descendants reigned happily for 18,000 moons, till Khoor (Cyrus?) invaded and conquered the country; but after many years' struggle they expelled the invader, and retained the name Khoorskush (Cyrus killed), now Kirghis. The descendants of Hersh continued to reign for 10,000 moons more, till Khoondroo (Alexander?) invaded the country, after which no separate legend of them seems to be recollected." Many other legends abound among this people, but how much is mere imagination "run riot," or invention to account for natural phenomena, and how much corrupt history, the reader may judge for himself by comparing them in the original form. It would scarcely repay us to occupy our pages with a reproduction of them. On the skirts of the mountains surrounding the Punkjkora and Lundye rivers, now the stronghold of Afghan tribes, are remains of the Swautis and other septs, apparently an older class of occupants, but in regard to whom our information is rather obscure. The Hindki (or Puraunchehs), a class of carriers, also probably belong to this nationality; they are of Hindoo extraction (p. 272).

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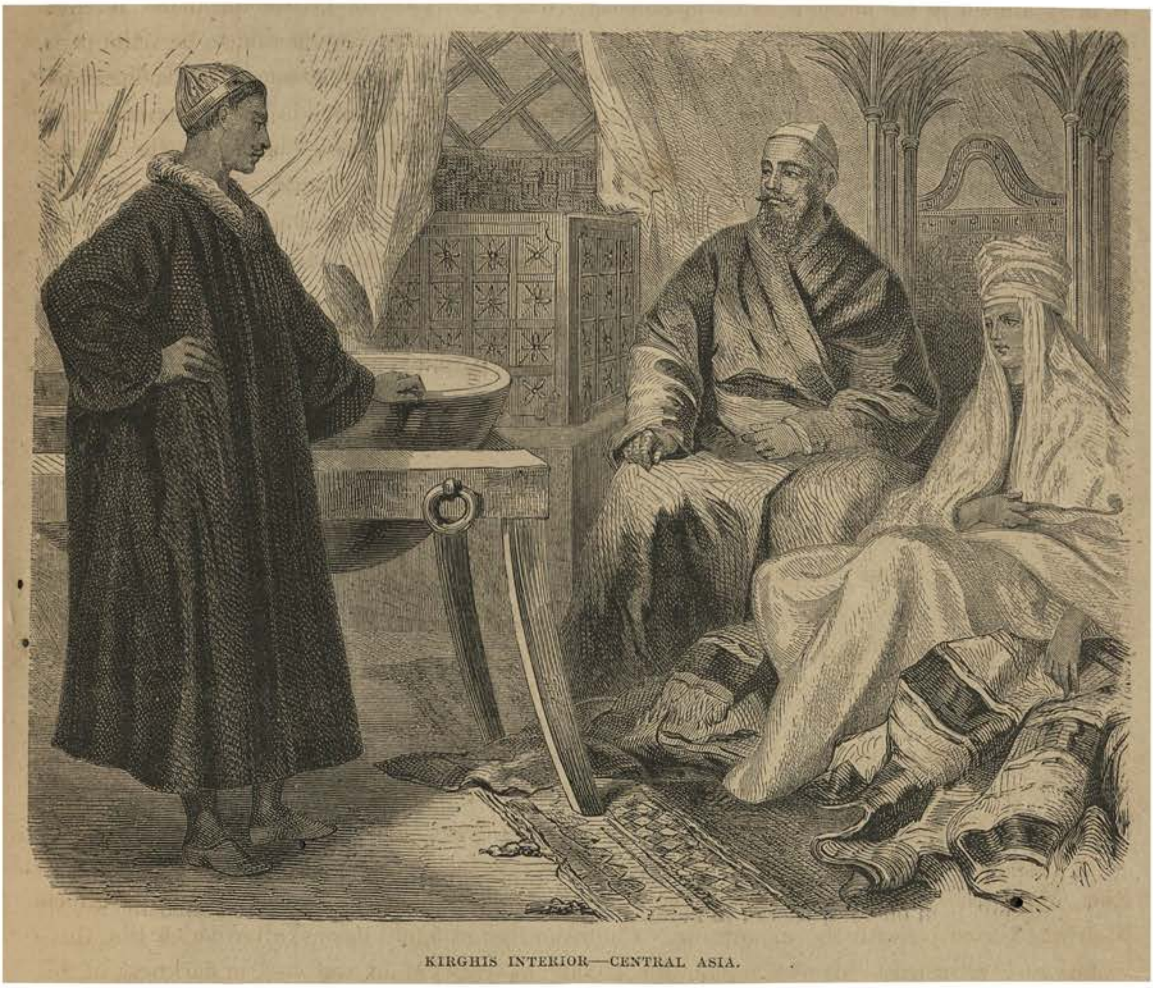
* By some geographers the Mazârah country is so considered.

† "Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal," Vol. xxii.

‡ Perhaps these names are retained in the Uztagh, Muztagh, and Altai Mountains.


KIRGHIS INTERIOR—CENTRAL ASIA.

Kafristan is the land of the *Kafirs*,[*] or pagan people, the name having no reference to the African nation of the same name, but is the term applied by the Mohammedans to all people not of the Moslem faith (Vol. ii., p. 228). It is derived from *Kafiar*, an unbeliever or infidel. We as yet know so little of the country that its boundaries cannot be very accurately stated. It may, however, be said to be bounded by the "Belut Tagh district on the west. On the east it touches Chinese Turkestan and Little Thibet. To the south lies Afghanistan, and to the north Kokand or Fergana, where the population is Tshagatai Turk." It is eminently a "kohistan," or country of mountains; for the Hindoo Coosh † and the Belut Tagh, along with other ranges more mysterious, belong to it. It is a land of gorges and valleys, of short streams and of long rivers. Some of them are carried to the Indus; of these one series is received by the Cabul river, another by the Shayak. The best measure of the inaccessibility of the country is to be found in the name of one of the districts, Kafiristan; what this means we have already seen. Is it not the land of the Kafir, Giaour, or infidel, whereunto Mohammedanism, triumphant elsewhere, has failed to penetrate? If such spots exist in Western Asia, they must be few and far between. They must be defended by either the most impracticable conditions of nature, or the most fanatic obstinacy of man. Be this as it may, there is within a day's journey of Shiite [Sheān] Persia, of Sunnite [Sonnee] Turkestan, of Buddhist Thibet, and of Brahminic India, a true Kafiristan, whither no Mohammedan can with safety penetrate. Kafiristan and Kafir are, of course, Mohammedan designations—a name which is, at one and the same time, native and general, being wanting. Other names there are, Afghan and Mohammedan also, though not impossibly native as well, as, Siaposh, Speen (white), and Tor (black), Siaposh.

The Kafir tribes are divided into very numerous rival septs, but all united against the hated Mohammedan nations in their vicinity, from whose raids into their country they have suffered so much. No European traveller can be proved to have entered their country, and the only information at all trustworthy which we have regarding these people is that furnished to Mr. Elphinstone by the Mollah Nujeeb.‡ So far as it goes, the following is an abstract of this not altogether very satisfactory account. He describes the valleys as well peopled, each valley being held by a separate tribe, family, or settlement. Some wear a vest of black goat-skins, others a dress of white cotton; hence the names of *black* infidel and *white* infidel which have been applied to certain of the tribes. All are, however, of light complexion. Roads, fit for anything but men on foot, there are none, and even these are continually intersected by ravines and torrents, over which swinging bridges are thrown. The villages rise along the slopes of the mountains in terraces, so that the roof of one house forms the floor of the one above it. These villages are numerous, and the largest may contain five hundred inhabitants.

They believe in one God, Imra, a name which also appears in the Hindoo Pantheon. They have, however, other idols, representations of departed heroes, who, if propitiated by honours being paid to them, can intercede with Imra on behalf of these worshippers. Such figures, both male and female, on foot and on horseback, in wood and in stone, were common about the villages. In the public apartment of a village called Caumdaish was a high wooden pillar, on which sat a figure with a spear in his hand. It was a representation of one of the village fathers or magnates, who had bought the privilege of setting it up by a series of feasts given to the whole community. Hospitality, it may be remarked, is a cardinal virtue among the Kafirs, by a judiciously liberal exercise of which an admission may be gained—more effectually than by any other course—to *Burri le Bula,* the Kafir heaven. A niggardly course of conduct will just as certainly lead the unhappy miser into *Burri Duggar,* or hell. When an entrance into the Kafir pantheon may thus be obtained through the ventral suffrages of the village gourmands, the number of divinities, as might be expected, is rather large. There may, however, be twenty or thirty chief deities, the names of which it is unnecessary to repeat, as the worthy mollah appears, in some cases at least, anxious to twist the Kafir gods into a corrupted likeness to the heroes of the Moslem faith. Sacrifices of animals, flour, butter, &c., are offered up to these idols, and prayers made to them chiefly for the extermination of the followers of Mohammed. These sacrifices are generally performed in the open air, but sometimes they are performed in temples or sacred houses, called *Imra Ummo.* Fire, though essential in all these rites—the fuel for which is obtained from a peculiar tree—is not looked upon as sacred, nor is an eternal fire ever kept up. The office of priest is hereditary, but it brings no great influence with it.

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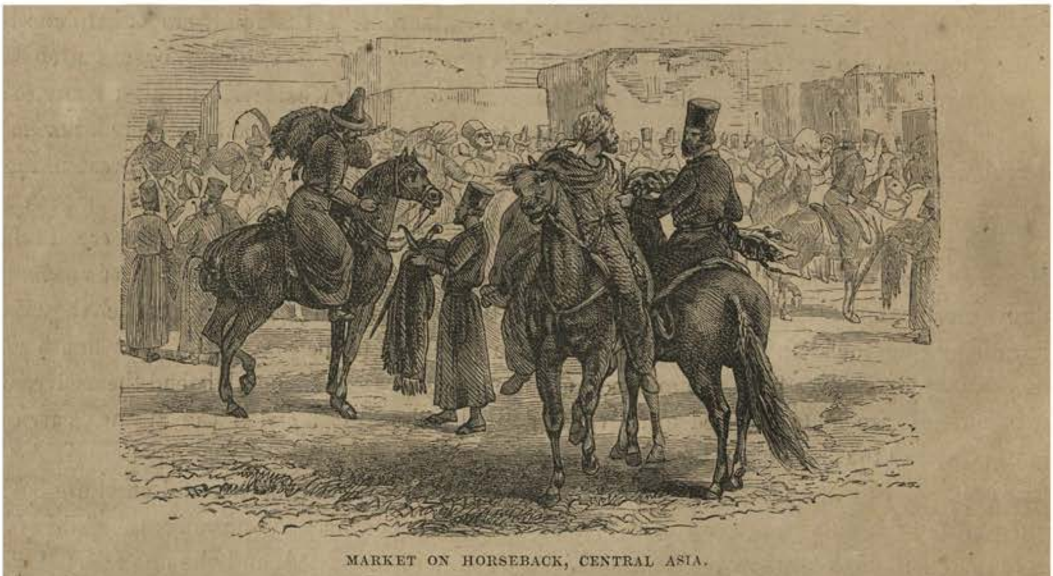
[*] The spelling of the word is really very immaterial, but perhaps it is as well to write the name of the people at present under consideration with a single f, in order to distinguish them from the African race, who is known by the same designation.

† "Hindoo-killed" as the word means.

‡ Elphinstone's "Cabul," Appendix to vol. ii., p. 373.

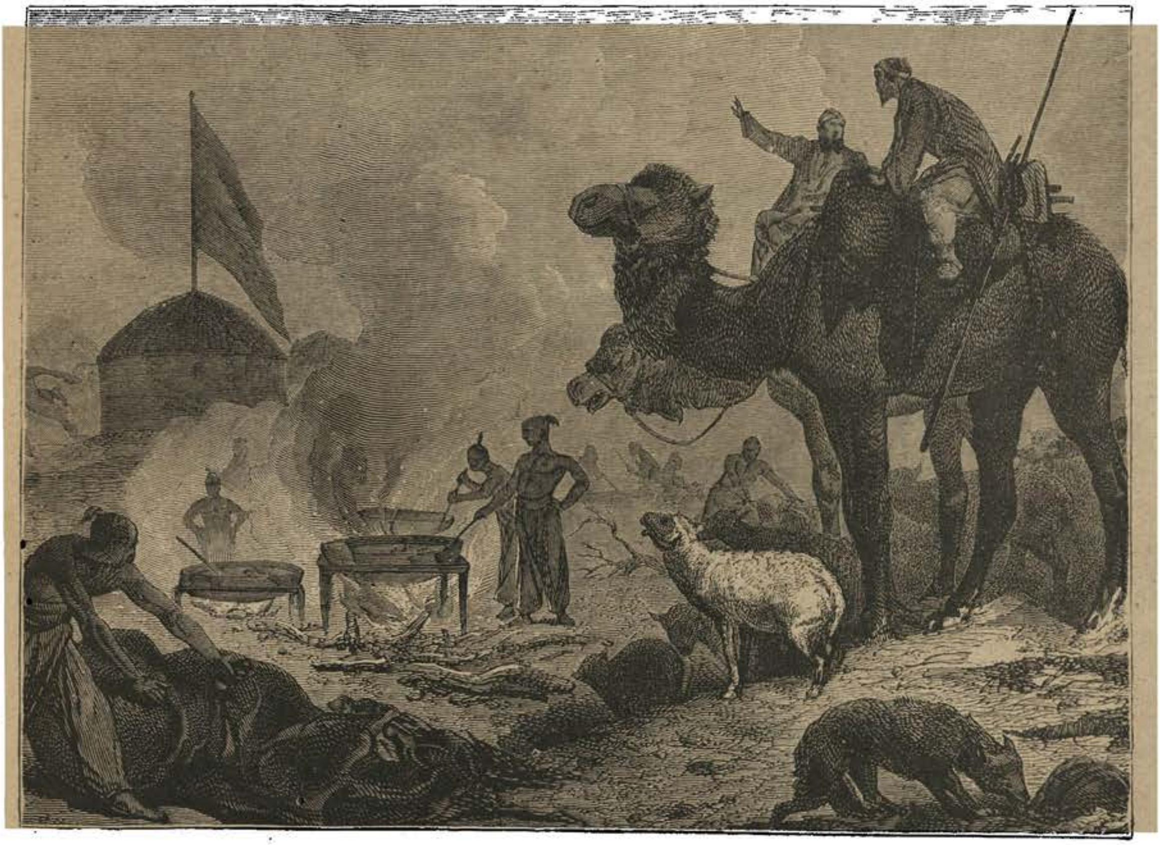
The Kafirs abstain from eating fish, but all other food is lawful. There are certain fixed days of festival, on one of which they throw ashes at each other, and on these occasions there is always sacrifice and feasting. At one of them the boys carry round pine torches, which they throw down before the idols, and then allow them (the torches) to be consumed. At another the women hide themselves from the men without the village, but when found defend themselves with switches, and are finally carried off. When a child is born, it is, with the mother, carried to a house beyond the precincts of the village, where they remain for twenty-four days. All this time they are looked upon as impure. The period having expired, both mother and child are bathed, and return to the village, accompanied by musicians and dancers. At naming, the child is held to the mother's breast, when the names of its ancestors are repeated, and the one selected which happened to be named when the child begins to suck. The men marry between the ages of twenty and thirty, and the women at sixteen to seventeen. The bridegroom sends some clothes and ornaments, and materials for a marriage feast, to the bride. This feast continues through the night, and the next day the bride, dressed in all her finery, is taken away by the bridegroom. The father adds some article of dress to his daughter's equipment, and perhaps gives the husband a cow or a slave. The girl is then led out, with a basket on her back, containing walnuts and fruits, prepared with honey, and, if it can be obtained, a silver cup. The whole village attends her singing and dancing, and a few days afterwards the price of the bride, amounting to perhaps as much as twenty cows, is paid over to the father. Polygamy is allowed, adultery but lightly punished, and the women go about unveiled, and perfectly free. They do all the domestic and some of the agricultural work. When a Kafir dies, he is dressed in his best clothes and extended on a bed, his arms lying beside him. The bed and body are then carried about by his kinsmen, whilst the attendants sing, dance, and perform a sham fight about it, the women meanwhile lamenting the deceased. At length the body is placed in a coffin and laid *above* ground. A funeral is always followed by a feast, and once a year a festival is held in honour of the dead, when food is laid out for his manes, or spirit, a custom corresponding closely to a similar one at Chinese funerals.

When a visit of condolence is paid to the house of the deceased, the visitor on entering throws his cap on the ground, draws his dagger, seizes the mourner by the hand, pulls him up, and forces him to join in a dance round the room. The mourners wear their best clothes, and sometimes put on a black fillet, ornamented with shells—one for each Mohammedan slain. They dance wildly, and drink wine—of which they make three kinds—freely. Notwithstanding the savage character of their warfare, they are, unless when exasperated to fury against the Mohammedans, a kind-hearted and exceedingly hospitable people—merry, affectionate, harmless. Though easily excited, they are soon appeased, and are of a sociable, joyous disposition. If a stranger arrives at a village, he is met by volunteers to carry his baggage, and every man of note is expected to be visited by him, and is therefore prepared to press on him food and drink. Even when Mr. Elphinstone's informant, the mollah Nujeeb, was a guest amongst them—as Mohammedans sometimes, though rarely are—he was treated with great kindness, and never threatened or affronted on account of his religion by any sober man. What is their political constitution is unknown. The regular magistrates can have but little power. On public matters the wealthier consult together, but the *lex talionis* is, as among all barbarous nations, the most prominent feature of their legal code.



MARKET ON HORSEBACK, CENTRAL ASIA.

Cattle and slaves constitute their chief wealth. Titles of honour of their own they have none, but they have adopted the Afghan title of "khan" for their rich or great men. Two goat-skins make the vest, and two more the petticoat of the Kafir, the hair being on the outside. His arms and head are bare, and the latter is shaven, with the exception of a long tuft on the crown of his head, and two curls over the ears. This is only after an enemy has been slain. The Kohighar Kafirs reverse in the process. The hair is grown naturally, but has a lock taken away for every Mussulman killed. Hence the heroes of Kohighar rejoice in long locks; those of Kohikaf and Kohiloh are shavelings. The chin is well bearded, but the hair is plucked from all other parts of the face. The chief differences in the women's dress consist in the headgear, and a red fillet round the head worn by the unmarried women, as the "silken snood" was at one time in Scotland, and is to this day among the peasant and fisher girls of Denmark. Their principal ornaments are ear-rings, neck-rings, and wrist-rings of silver, pewter, and brass, which are worn on all occasions except when they are in mourning. The men also wear similar ornaments on arriving at manhood, and the occasion on which they first assume this is one of great festivity and ceremony. The wealthier people dress more sumptuously. Beneath the goat-skin vest they wear a shirt, and in summer sometimes a shirt takes the place of the heavier garment. Instead of goat-skin this is sometimes made of cotton, or black hair cloth, or its place is supplied by a white blanket of Kashgar manufacture, worn like a Highland plaid. Cotton trousers, worked with flowers in red and black worsted, slit at the top, and fringed worsted stockings, with half boots of white goat-skin, and a few other superfluities not in use by the common people, are worn by the great men and warriors.



KIRGHIS FEAST AFTER A FUNERAL.

Their hatred of the Mohammedan is intense, and not without good reason; for the followers of the Prophet are in the habit of invading their country, and carrying off youths and maidens as slaves—slaves of that nation being held in great esteem, and they have been known to rise to offices of dignity and trust under the Afghan government. The Afghans have even attempted expeditions of greater importance than mere slave-hunting raids, but with the result of their being compelled to evacuate the country with loss.[*] So intense is their hatred of the Mohammedans, that until a young Kafir has killed one he is not allowed to share in many privileges. After he has done so he dances at the solemn feast of the "Numminaut," with a sort of turban on his head, with a feather stuck in for every Moslem slain. The number of bells attached to his waist is similarly regulated, and so also is the right of flourishing his axe above his head in the dance. Another privilege accorded to the slayer of a Mohammedan is the wearing of a red woollen cap or cockade. Finally, if a Kafir has killed many Mohammedans; he erects a pole in front of his door, in which are bored a number of holes, a wooden pin being inserted into a hole for every one of his Mussulman enemies killed, and a ring for every one wounded. The natural result follows. No Mohammedan is enslaved, but invariably killed; and all the Kafir slaves are of their own race, being captives in the inter-tribal wars, or the booty taken in private raids made by individuals on families weak enough to allow this to be done with impunity. Even within the same community the strong steal from the weak. If a man has no relatives, he has no friends to defend him, and, accordingly, with the loss of his relatives, he also soon loses his freedom also. The slaves are not, however, ill-used.

The Kafir equipments in war are a bow, about four and a half feet long, with a leathern string; arrows made of reeds, barbed, and sometimes poisoned; a dagger, a knife, a flint, with tinder made of bark. Firearms and swords have been introduced of late years. Their mode of attack is rarely to take a village by assault in open day, but the ordinary savage mode of ambuscade and surprisal by night. The Kafir may be looked upon as one extreme type of the Persian group, just as the townsmen of Shiraz, Tehran, or Ispahan are the other; while the Afghans, Kurds, and Beluchi are intermediate between the two extremes.

As already remarked, we know next to nothing of the Kafirs except from the report of the mollah—Mr. Elphinstone's informant—and vague, and often exceedingly questionable, reports of the Chinese. However, within the last year or two the interest excited in Central Asiatic geography and ethnology by the explorations of Russian,[†] English, and other European travellers, and of the native spies despatched through the countries adjoining the Himalayas by Major Montgomery, of the Indian Trigonometrical Survey, various documents have come to light. Among these is one, found in the Russian État-Major archives, which professes to be the journal of a journey made through the Kafir country for the purpose of buying horses for the English Government, by a Georg Ludwig von ——— (the name being erased in the original MS.). It professes to give an account of the geography and ethnology of a tract of country very little, if at all known, and of a race of Kafirs which were known only by name. "If," says M. Veniukoff, to whom the disinterring of this narrative is due, "we connect Cabul, Badakshan, Yarkand, and Cashmere by straight lines, we shall obtain a square surface, the physical features and peculiarities of the inhabitants of which constitute it, in all probability, the most inaccessible and obscure part of Asia." This is the region which the enigmatical German, Baron Ludwig von ———, professes to describe. His narrative, though very circumstantial in every statement, has, notwithstanding the keen defence of its authenticity by its original discoverer, and various Russian and French geographers, been shown, with very good reason, by Sir Henry Rawlinson, the late Lord Strangford, and other most competent authorities, to be in all likelihood an impudent forgery.[*] Under these circumstances it is rather difficult to say what tribes the baronial horsedealer is describing, or whether his remarks are worth being annotated. However, in the dearth of information regarding the Kafir races, and on the plea that the question of the authenticity of his documents is yet (?) *sub judice*, we may glean a note or two from his narrative. He professes to describe the Belors—a Kafir race inhabiting the southern portion of the so-called Bolor mountains—though it is doubtful if such exist, at least under that name.[†] The old Chinese traveller, Hiuen-Tsang,[‡] talked of the "blue-eyed" race, but gives them but a sorry character. They were hideous in appearance, strangers to hospitality and justice, and given to violence and plunder. Subsequently, Burnes obtained some information in regard to them from a Kafir boy at Cabul. He was told that they fed on bears and monkeys, and *scalped their dead enemies*. Gold is found in their mountains, and ornaments are made out of it. The women perform all the manual labour—this being true of all the Kafirs—till the ground, and are usually harnessed in the plough with the oxen. The Chinese account differs somewhat. Among other statements one made by the Buddhist traveller mentioned, is that four or five brothers possess one wife in common—in other words, polyandry exists—and live with her alternately, the boots of the husband for the time being, hung outside the door, being looked upon as sufficient warning that he is in possession, a custom also followed by the Todas of India. The paternity of the children that are born are recognised in turn. There are no fraternal ties, age and seniority being the rules by which they are governed. There is little agricultural land, and the people are generally poor. Goats' milk is their principal article of diet, and a spirit made from mares' milk is a favourite intoxicating liquor with them. The ruler is styled "Bi," and tribute is paid to him in human kind. Those who have five or six children deliver up three, and so on in proportion, the children thus surrendered in tribute being sold to the Kaisaks, to the Andijanis, and in the various towns of Turkestan. The price they fetch is, according to Chinese authority, fifty to ninety lans of silver (£15 to £27). The Belors are naturally timid, and the Buruts (a Mongol tribe of Central Asia) capture these men with impunity. The Chinese to this day look upon Kafir people as not nearly so ferocious as the Mohammedans represent them. Georg Ludwig von ——— describes the country as charming, and the rivers crossed by ferry-boats, steadied by large inflated goat-skins at each side of the boat, a tree branch answering for a rudder. The people he describes as being fair and blue-eyed, free, gallant, and hospitable, though continually harassed by their Moslem neighbours. On this account the older inhabitants are forced at one place, where the Mohammedans frequently enter the country, to keep watch from sunrise to sunset, after which they return to their villages, as no one would dare to cross the turbulent river, which is the boundary at that spot, after dark. Their dress is, according to our traveller (?), much the same as we have described it in the Kafirs generally. The villagers were hospitable to him in the extreme, offering him abundance of wine, and begging the baron's party to stay with them, after they had satisfied themselves that they were not Mohammedans. Stone figures were seen here and there, reminding us of the celebrated idols of Bamian, the erection of which is attributed to the Kafirs; and sacrifices of a black rabbit and a snipe were offered up to the god of death, in gratitude for the safe arrival of the travellers at a village. The women are described as attractive, and far from discreet in their behaviour to the strangers. Indeed, chastity before marriage is not looked upon as a virtue, and is rather a matter to be ashamed of by the future husband, no matter who he be. Truffles are found in their country, and are hunted out by little black pigs, but not eaten by the natives, under the idea that they are produced by thunder striking the ground. Horses were found amongst them in abundance, and considerable copper in the mountains. Various other details are given by Georg Ludwig von ———; but how much is true, or whether the whole is, as Sir Henry Rawlinson affirms,

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[*] This was the case when the Khan of Badakshan, one at least of the princes of Khasgar, the Pādshah of Cooner, the Baz of Bajour, and several Eusofzye Afghan Khans confederated together against the Kafirs on the borders of their territories. The Kafirs are looked upon by the neighbouring Mohammedans in much the same light as are the bushmen of South Africa by the Kaffirs of that region. Kafristan, as well as Balkh, Badakshan, and Wakhan, are now considered part of Afghanistan.

[†] See F. von Hellwald's "*Centralasien, Landschaften u. Volker in Kaschgar, Turkestan, Kaschmir u. Tibet*" (1874).

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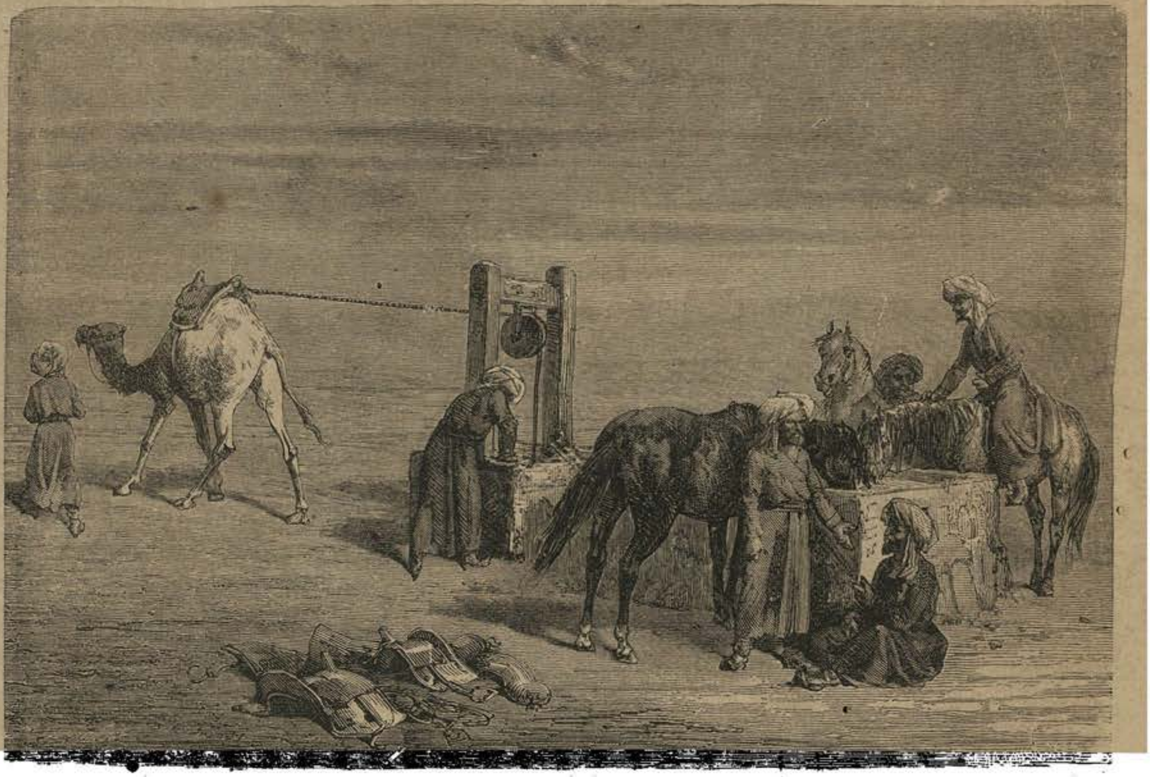
[*] Veniukoff, "Journal of the Royal Geographical Society," vol. xxxvi. (1866), pp. 248 and 265; Rawlinson, "Proceedings of the Royal Geographical Society," vol. x., p. 134, and "Journal of the Royal Geographical Society," vol. xlii., p. 482; Strangford, "Proceedings of the Royal Geographical Society," vol. x., p. 301; Yule, *ibid.*, 473; Mitchell's "Russians in Central Asia" (1865), p 50, &c. It is suspected by the sceptics as to its authenticity-to have been the work of M. Klaproth, a distinguished but unscrupulous Orientalist, who, under the combined influences of a desire for fame and filthy lucre, fell sadly from virtue towards the close of his life.

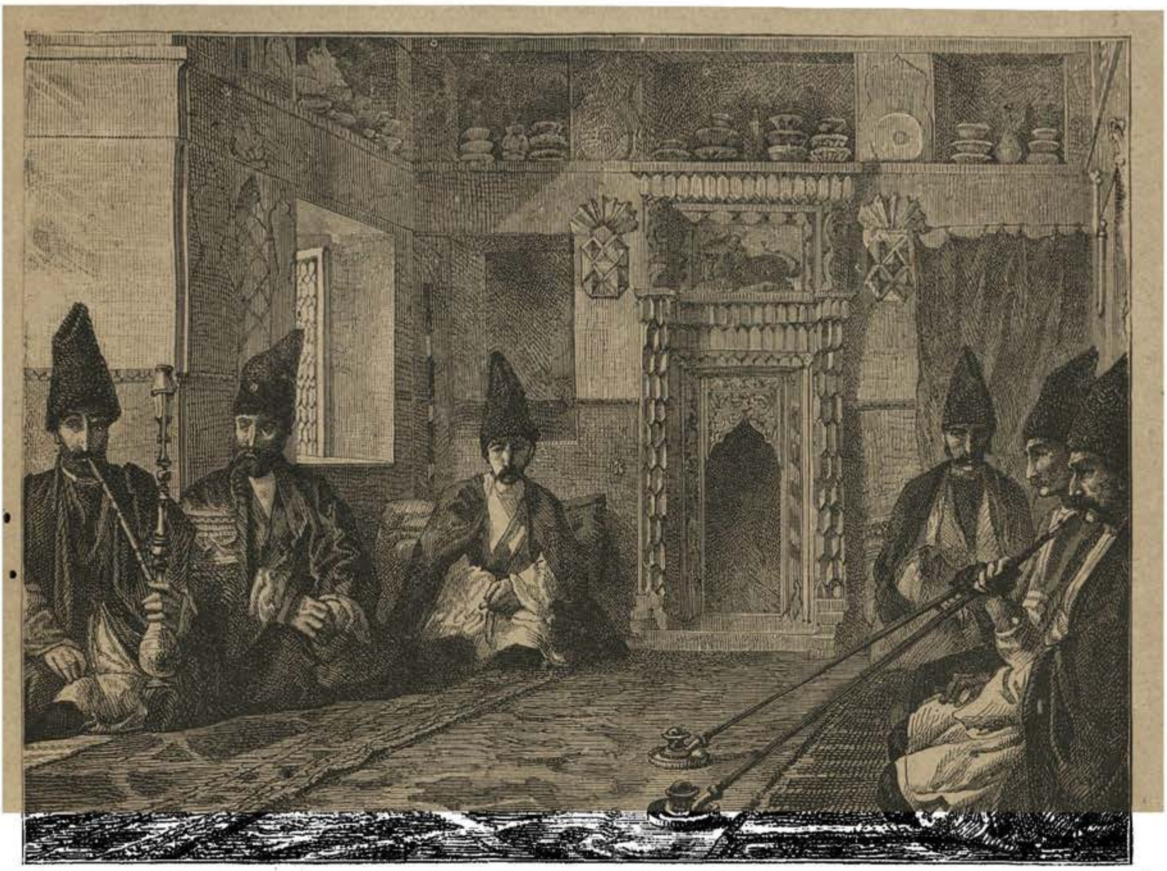
[†] See Colonel Yule, "Journal of the Royal Geographical Society," vol. xlii., p. 473, and his splendid edition of "Marco Polo" (1875).

[‡] Julien, "*Vie et Voyages de Hiuen-Tsang*," p. 273, &c.



WELL IN THE HYRCANIAN DESERT, CENTRAL ASIA.

an "elaborate hoax," it is impossible for one less intimately acquainted with Central Asiatic geography than the gallant General to say. At all events it shows how vague is our knowledge of the region inhabited by these people. It demonstrates, as M. Veniukoff truly remarks, that there are regions on the earth—and this is one—of which, owing to the enmity of man, we know less than we do of the surface of the moon. If we will look at Behr and Medler's map of the latter, and M. Veniukoff's of the Pamir table-land, the Bolor range, and the sources of the Oxus, the truth of the statement will be apparent.



AN ARMENIAN DRAWING-ROOM.

An additional interest attaches to these Belor Kafirs, and indeed to the Kafirs generally, from the belief, widely entertained, that their ancestors were those Belors against whom Alexander the Great had to contend, and, to use M. Veniukoff's words, "that their distinct peculiarity of type, namely, their blue eyes, would, on one hand, tend to encourage the supposition of their affinity to the Germano-Sclavonian races of Europe; and, on another, to favour the hypothesis of their being a remnant of the Central Asiatic Ussuns, who disappeared from Chinese history in the fourth century of our era, and who partly fled to the upper sources of the Amu-Daria, having also previously been known to have existed in the country bordering Lake Issykul, and to the north of Thibet."

The neighbouring people of Badakshan are Tadjiks, *i.e.*, a race akin to the Iranian Persians

(p. 222), but their rulers claim a non-Asiatic origin, and declare that they are descendants of Alexander the Great.

At all events, in this region of Central Asia we must look for the original home of that great Aryan race, who at some remote period migrated in the one direction into Hindostan, introducing civilisation into India, and, on the other hand, into Europe, giving rise to the majority of the present nationalities of that quarter of the world. In the Kafir country are many ruins, and the Kafirs doubtless constitute the most easterly limits of the Aryan family, the Indian branch of which we shall commence to consider in the next and subsequent chapters.

The *Wakhanis* are a better known race of Paropamisans. They live upon the drainage of the Oxus, rather than the Cabul and Indus. In religion they are more Mohammedan than pagan, though otherwise closely allied to the Kafirs of Kafristan, with whom both they and the Badakshi are conterminous on their southern borders. It is said that the subjects of the khan or "mir" of Wakhani do not number more than 1,000, distributed over a few villages. In height they are about five feet six, and in their physiognomy are Tadjik or Persian. Sheep, cows, ponies, yaks, and goats constitute their chief wealth; their goats give a wool equal to the famous wool of Thibet used in weaving Cashmere shawls..

Slaves form another item of their wealth. Slavery is rife through all this country—in Hazarah, Badakshan, Wakhan, Sirikul, Kunjut, &c. A good strong male slave is worth about the same as a large dog or a horse in Upper Badakshan, viz., about eighty rupees, or £8. A slave girl is valued at from four horses, or more, according to her looks, &c.; men are, however, almost always exchanged for dogs. "When I was in Little Thibet, a returned slave, who had been in the Cashmere army, took refuge in my camp. He said he had been well enough treated as to food, &c., but he could never get over having been exchanged for a dog, and constantly harped on the subject, the man who sold him evidently thinking the dog the better animal of the two. In Lower Badakshan, and more distant places, the prices of slaves are much enhanced, and payment is made in coin." *

The cold in the Wakhani valley is intense in winter. All the people wear thick woollen "chogas" and trousers. The houses are built of stone and mud, with a flat roof, and are warmed by large stoves. They are mostly Sheean Mohammedans, and look to the Agar Khan of Bombay as their spiritual guide. They pay to that dignitary one-tenth of their income, and complain much of the oppression of their chief.

There is perhaps no more interesting country to the intelligent traveller than Central Asia. Almost as unknown as Central Africa, it far surpasses that country in archæological and ethnological interest. In all likelihood it was once the cradle of civilisation, and the womb of nations, as it at the present time is "the roof of the world." But the ethnologist, whether he has to deal with its varied inhabitants, speaking many languages, regarding which we only know enough to confuse us, from a purely scientific, or still more so, like the present writer, from a popular point of view, leaves it with a gladness mingled with a regret that so little satisfactorily can be said in regard to it. In accordance with the plan of this work, viz., to say more of the nations who are savage, barbarous, or little known, than of those whose history and manners can be read of in a hundred books, we have dwelt longer on them than we can in the next volume, on nations of vastly greater importance in the modern history of the world.

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* Montgomerie, "Journal of the Royal Geographical Society," vol. xli. (1871), p. 146 ("Report of the Mirza's Exploration from Cabul to Kashgar").

ARMENIANS.

By some ethnologists the Armenians (Figs. on pp. 285, 288) are included in the Persian group. Though this is perhaps a doubtfully correct classification, it may be convenient to notice them here. *Haik* is the name by which they designate themselves, *Armenian* the more common name by which they are known in the world outside, being probably of Syrian origin. Their home is chiefly in the Turkish province of Erzeroum, and in the district of Erivan, which Russia acquired some twenty years ago from Persia. In Erivan is their chief monastery, where resides the patriarch. Mount Ararat is also in Erivan, and round it circulates, as round a centre, the Armenian legends and superstitions.

The Armenians are Christians of a pronounced type, with a native alphabet, and a canon containing several books, pronounced apocryphal by the Western Church. Their ritual is more Greek than Latin, and their system of monasteries approximates to that of the Thibetan Buddhists. Though at times the Armenians have been independent, and even powerful, their political relations have been usually with Persia, which at present divides the sovereignty over them with Turkey and Russia. There is also a colony of Armenians in Persia, near Ispahan, many in India, thousands in Constantinople, and on the island of St. Lazarus, in Venice, there is an important settlement of Armenian monks, with a monastery rich in published and unpublished manuscripts. The number in European Russia is under 40,000. In Armenia they are agriculturists; in Persia, &c., they are merchants; and in India they divide with the Jews and Parsees the almost entire monopoly of banking and money-lending.

Before becoming Christians, the Armenians were fire-worshippers, like the ancient Persians and the modern Parsees. Some are Nestorians—that schism having spread widely amongst them in the eighth or ninth centuries—and a few are Roman Catholics, Gregorians, and Protestants. There are patriarchs over all these sections of the Armenians, the head patriarch being only recognised by the orthodox, who number about 4,000,000. Some of the oldest works on the Christian doctrines are in the Armenian language, and one of the oldest known translations of the Scriptures is in the same tongue,* which is one of the oldest of the Aryan type.

As a nation they are serious, laborious, intelligent, and hospitable, fond of the traditions of their race, and more amenable to European manners and ways than most Orientals.

Lastly, the *Osselines*, of the Caucasian range, are looked upon as of the Persian stock. They are all Russian subjects, but barbarous and given to pillage. They are so far civilised as to use beds, tables, and chairs, on the latter of which they seat themselves after the European fashion.

The *Turkomans* might have been included under the Persian group, as they live for the most part in or on the borders of Persia, and are largely mixed with Persian blood; indeed, the present Shah is more Turkoman than Persian. The race, however, is Turkish, and under that type it will be described. There are also some of the Persian stock found in Bokhara, Khiva, and the other central Asiatic Khanates, but these countries are also essentially Turkish.

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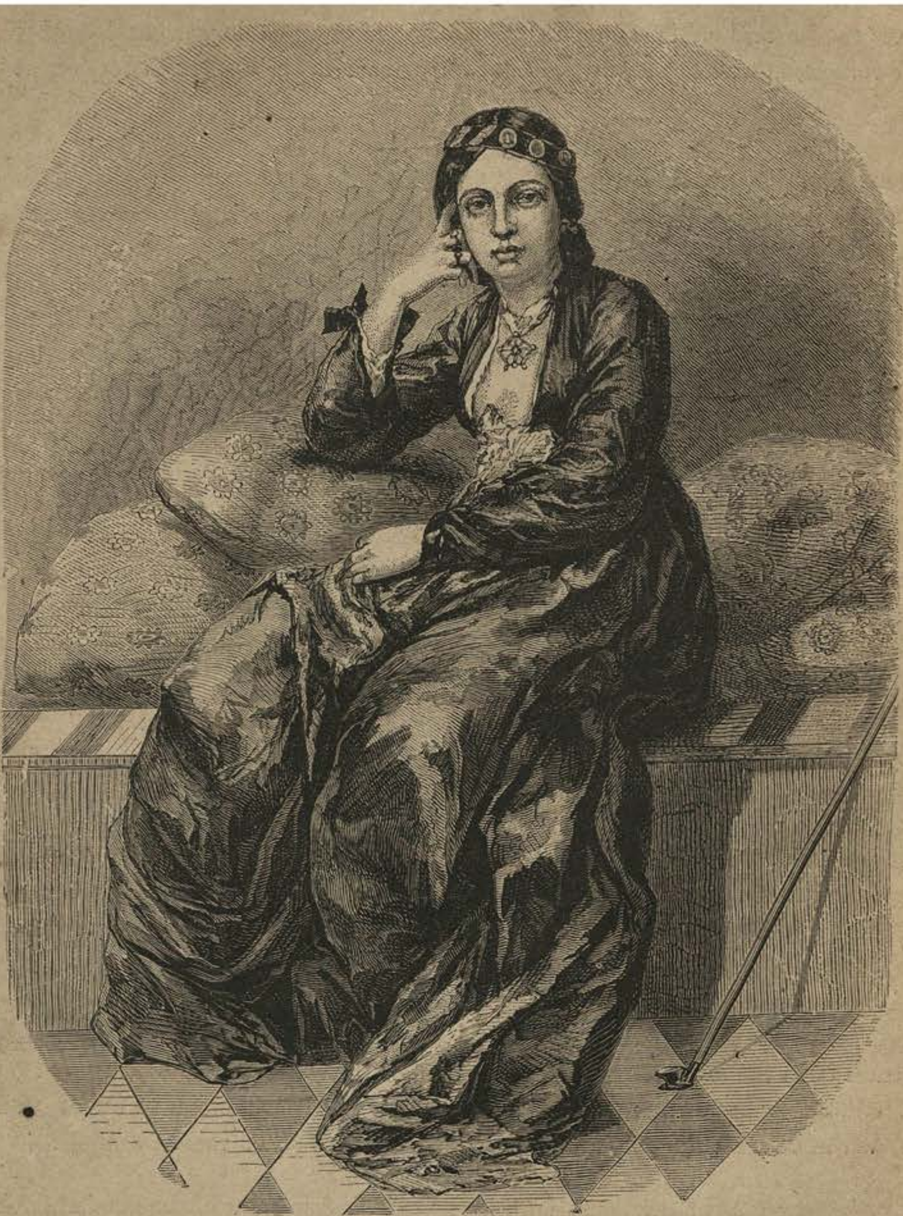
* Latham, *lib. cit.*, vol. ii., p. 73.

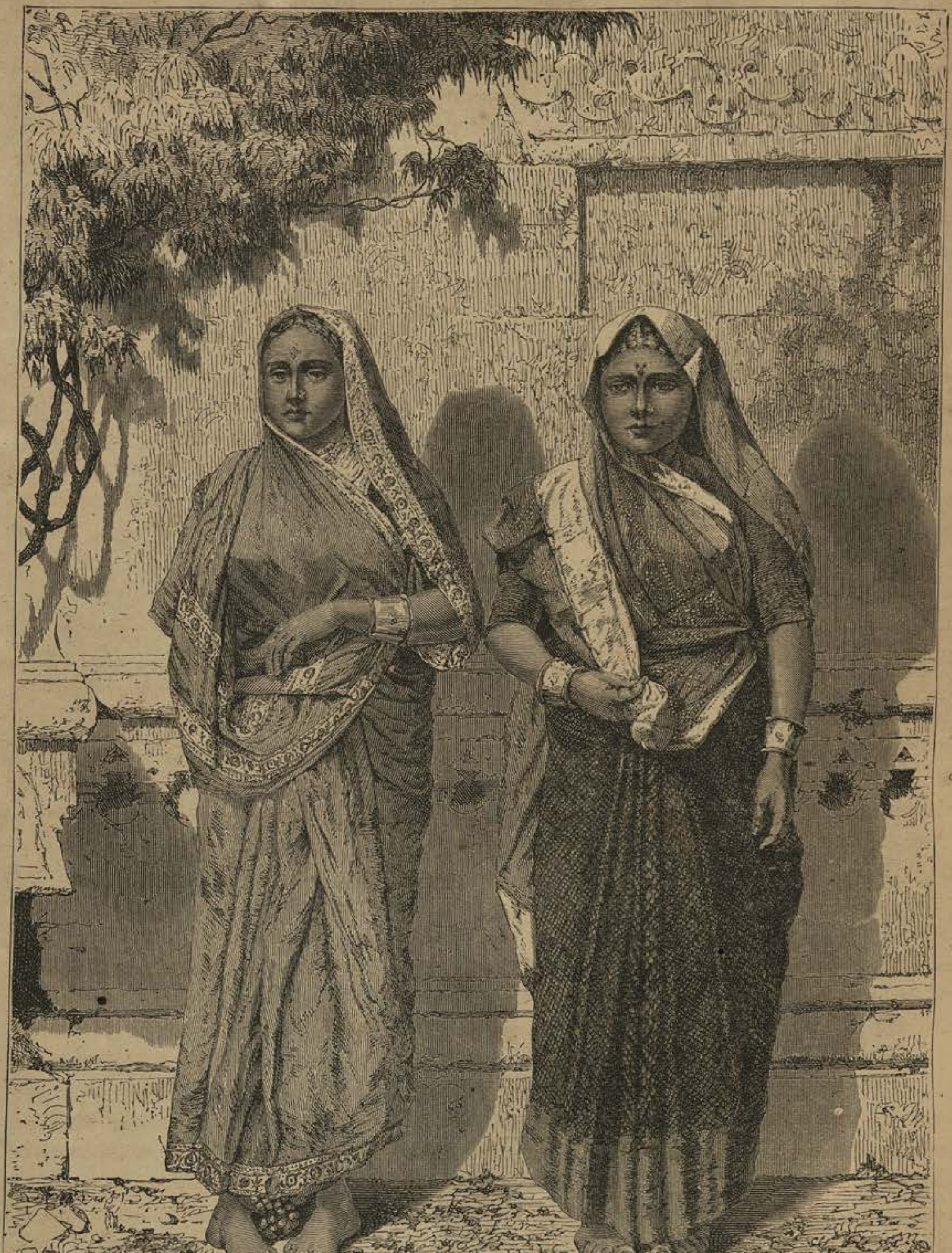


AN ARMENIAN LADY.

CHAPTER XV.

THE INDIAN STOCK: THE ABORIGINAL RACES.

LEAVING for a time the great uplands of Asia, we find, on the western slopes of the Himalayas, on the hill country, and in the rich plains of Hindostan, a wonderful agglomeration of races, which, for convenience sake, we have grouped under the designation of the Indian Stock. It is



HINDOO WOMEN OF BOMBAY.

Tulava, 150,000. The dialects of these languages, so distinct one from another, are so numerous as to be practically, for all purposes of intercourse, separate languages. In addition there are numerous mixed languages spoken by wandering races, or "castes," whose occupation requires them to move about from place to place; though their dialects are naturally more composed of words from the language of the country to which they belong than any other. The gipsies are examples of these wanderers; they have roamed all over the world—America probably excepted—and are of Indian descent.* Indeed, the Romany language is formed upon the Hindi language. Finally, Hindōstānī (or Urdū) is the language of the Mohammedans of the greater part of the north-western provinces. It is founded on Hindi, but has more Persian and Arabic words in it than any of the other vernacular dialects, and is also written in Arabic characters. It is, in addition, the *lingua franca* of the whole of our Indian empire; yet "there is little in the structure of Urdū of the loose and arbitrary character which some recent writers on the grammar have attributed to it." † It has of late years been the medium through which a large number of books—chiefly translations or imitations from English or Persian—have been added to the literature of India. The language has therefore now passed through the transitional stage which it underwent so long, the absence of a literature rendering the addition of new words and idioms easy and almost certain.

Language, at its easiest, is the most intricate question the student of race has to deal with. The intricacy is at its worst in India, and the reader will thank the writer for leading him past such troubled waters without an attempt to fathom their muddy depths.

In India the Hindoos are generally looked upon as forming the population. This is no doubt true, but when the Hindoo races came into India from the plains of high Asia, they found aborigines in the country. The Hindoos,‡ again, were succeeded by the Mohammedans, and the Mohammedans in their turn had their great empire wrested from them by the most powerful, though in numbers the fewest, of all the people who have entered India, viz., the Europeans. We thus find in India what Mr. Ludlow has very aptly called four "strata" of people, viz., the Aborigines, Hindoos, Mohammedans, and Europeans. The first three have often mixed, and in some cases amalgamated, but they still remain so distinct that their characteristics can be easily stated. The Mohammedans and Europeans not being *of* India, but only *in* India, we will have only to mention incidentally. They are not properly races, but only co-religionists of many nationalities.

The differences between the aborigines and the Hindoos are so concisely stated by General Briggs, that we may give them almost in his words. 1st. The Hindoos are essentially people of caste, while their religious and social distinctions are unknown among the aborigines. 2nd. Widows among the Hindoos are forbidden to marry, but among the aborigines they are permitted to do so, and, indeed, generally marry their late husband's younger brother. 3rd. The aborigines, unlike the Hindoos, have no prejudices about eating the flesh of any animal, and do not, like the Hindoos, venerate the cow. 4th. The Hindoo is a "total abstainer" from all fermented liquors, while, on the contrary, the aborigines drink to excess, and consider no ceremony complete without a debauch. 5th. The Hindoo will only eat food prepared by people of his own or a higher caste, while the aborigines have no scruples about eating food prepared by any one. 6th. The aborigines consecrate every ceremony by spilling blood and offering up a living sacrifice, while the Hindoos look upon the shedding of blood with horror. 7th. The Hindoos have a priesthood composed of the "Brahmins," who are greatly venerated by them, while the aborigines only respect their own self-created priests, according to "their mode of life, and their skill in magic and sorcery, in divining future events, and in curing diseases." 8th. The Hindoos burn their dead, while the aborigines who have not adopted Hindoo customs bury theirs with their arms, and sometimes their cattle, a victim being sacrificed to atone for the sins of the deceased. 9th. Among the Hindoos municipal institutions prevail, while the aborigines are ruled after the patriarchal manner. In his courts of justice the Hindoo goes on the principle of having his equals to judge him, while the tribunals of the aborigines are composed of heads of families or of tribes chosen for life. Lastly, writing was brought into India by the Hindoos at least 3,000 years ago, and with it the elements of literature and science; the

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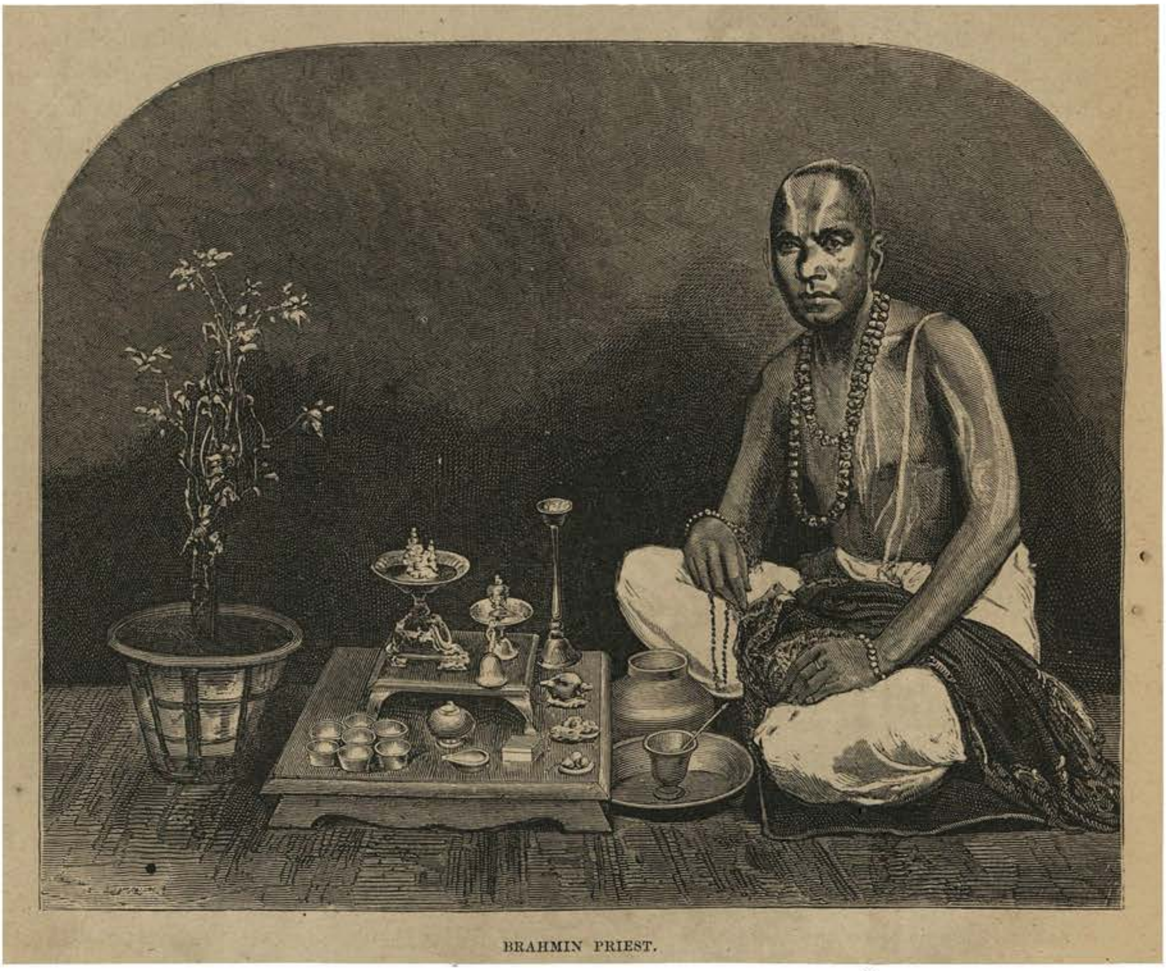
* The Jats are believed to be the original of these races. (Goeje's "Contributions to the History of the Gipsies"; Burton's "Sindh and the Races that inhabit the valley of the Indus" [1851]).

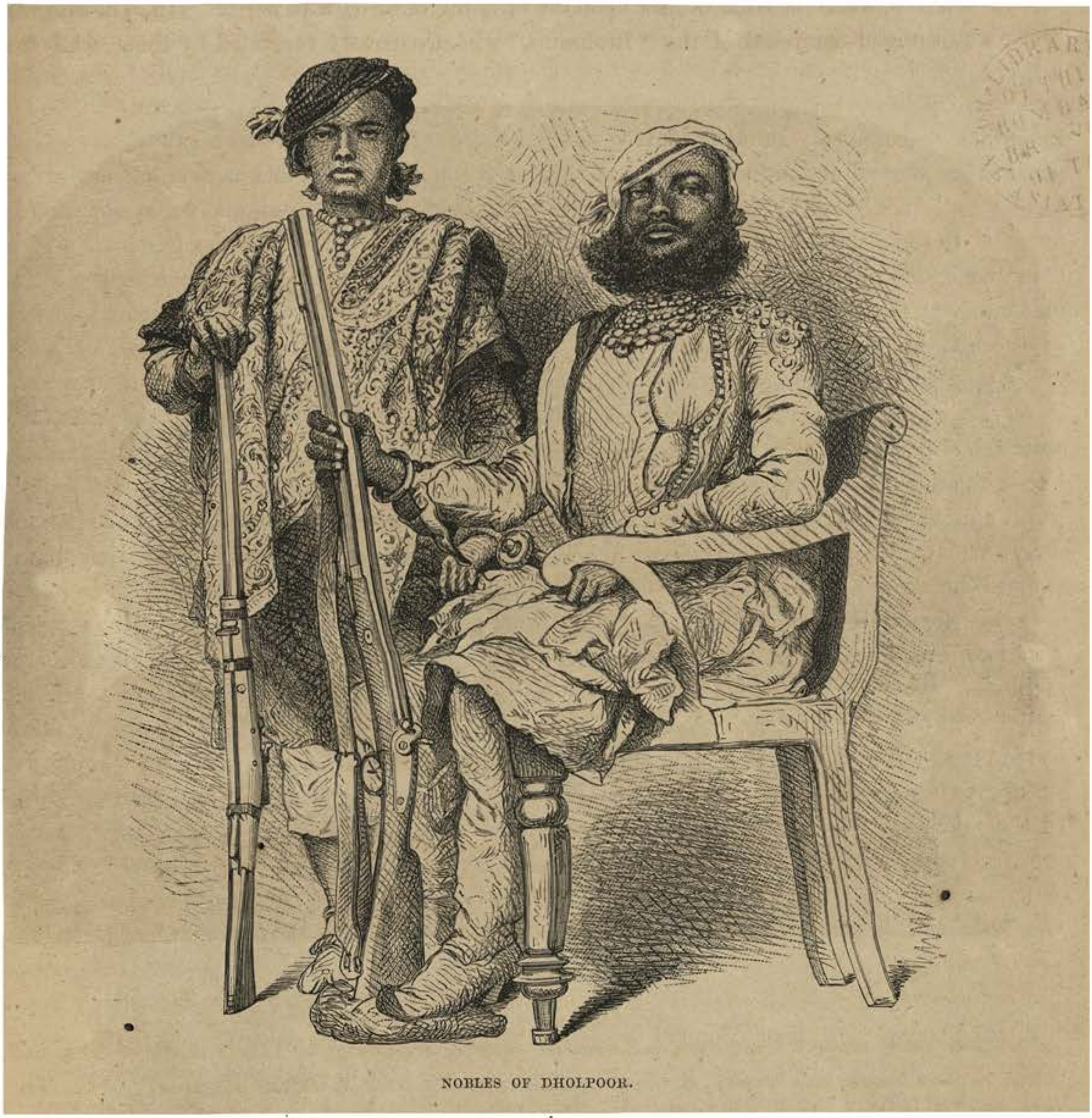
† Platt, "A Grammar of the Hindūstānī or Urdū language" (1874).

‡ I have adopted the spelling which is most familiar to the unlearned English reader, though Hindú is the more correct form in which the word should be written.



BRAHMIN PRIEST.

aborigines, on the contrary, are illiterate—they can neither read nor write, and a Hindoo is even forbidden by his creed to teach them. The Tamul (pronounced Tamool), the chief aboriginal language, is, however, now highly cultivated, and possesses an abundant literature. It is believed, from the intrinsic evidence of the oldest Hindoo literature, that many of the most salient of these distinctions arose after the time these books were written. Who are these aborigines, now found scattered in little groups over India, isolated in communities on the hills to which they have been driven by the more powerful races who monoplise the valley below? It is now generally agreed by the best authorities that they are of Scythian descent, their languages belonging to the same group as those of the Tartars. They differ, however, from the Tartars in being blacker by several degrees than the pure-blooded Hindoos of the higher



NOBLES OF DHOLPOOR.

castes, and when the "Rig Vedas" was written, 3,000 years or more ago, the aborigines were black. The tribes in the north-east, owing to the recent infusion of Tartar blood, are much fairer than those of middle and southern India; the Garrows of north-east Bengal are also brown in complexion. Though no doubt there is among the aborigines a Scythian element, it is more than probable, as Mr. Ludlow and others * point out, that this element was introduced among an already existing black aboriginal population, of whose origin we are, and in all likelihood must for ever remain, ignorant. From this new element the aborigines most probably learned the arts of architecture and what little civilisation they were found possessed of when the Hindoos came into the country. Into the Hindoo religion and community doubtless many of the aboriginal tribes merged and are now lost; but most of them still remain in a more or less primitive state, greatly neglected by the British Government, which has on more than one occasion been indebted to their valour and loyalty, qualities not generally found among the Hindoos. The tribes which merged into Hindooism have no doubt been lost as political communities, but their influence was certainly to leaven the religion of the more powerful race, introducing into its pantheon many of their black-skinned gods. The condition of the aboriginal tribes is wretched; many, especially those now subdued by the Hindoos, being in a condition little better than actual slavery. In other cases they are members of the Hindoo community without being actually absorbed, and are employed as watchmen to the villages, &c. Those who are collected in tribes live in the mountain fastnesses, or in the depths of the forests. These are rude savages, going about almost naked, but yet bearing the character of being honest and faithful. They are also brave and warlike, and are armed with bows and arrows: in the English army they have proved themselves good soldiers and faithful to their new masters.

The free tribes now number about 8,000,000, but in addition there are more than twice that number of semi-Hindooised "outcasts." In early times they seem to have been more civilised than now. In that oldest of Hindoo writings—the "Rig Vedas"—they are described as living in cities, and remembrances of these valiant pagan foes still live in Hindoo fairy tales in the form of the hideous, rich, and cunning Rakshas, on whom the princes lost in the jungle are always coming every now and again. (*Vide* that charming book, "Old Deccan Days.") In the midst of the dense jungle can yet be seen ruins of towns and houses, which your awe-struck guide will tell you are "the remains of Rakshas' palaces and cities." Water-courses, roads, forts, now in ruin and decay, are equally pointed out as the work of "old Gond Rajahs." Though conquered and oppressed, the aborgines still consider themselves the possessors, if not the lords, of the land. Indeed, the claim is in one case at least recognised by the conquerers, or perhaps what I am about to relate, on Mr. Ludlow's authority, is only an instance of a claim originally granted for policy, becoming in time confirmed, though the causes which originally made it necessary no longer existed. The case in point is this: The Meenas of Rajpootana, to the west of the central Indian plateau, who cherish these psuedo-proprietary rights with greater keenness than most tribes, have a distich to remind them of their rights, which runs—"The Rajah is proprietor of his share; I am the proprietor of the land." "A Meena has to apply the '*tila*,' or 'tilaka,' a red spot, emblematical of royalty, on the forehead of each successive Rajpoot Rajah of Merwar, and this is done with blood drawn from a Meena's toe. The same ceremony is performed by a Bheel on the accession of the Rajpoot Rajah of Oodipore, the first in rank of all Hindoo sovereigns. The symbolism of the act seems to be that the Hindoo sovereign's title is not complete until the aborigines are willing to shed their blood for him. As respects the Deccan, indeed, we should not forget that the date of the deposition of the aboriginal stratum is by no means remote. The most warlike aboriginal tribe of the south, the Bedars, were only subdued at the close of last century by the last dynasty of Mussulman conquerors, that of Mysore. And deep in the heart of the Mussulman Nizam's country, we are told, the Bedar Rajah of Sorapore 'still holds his patrimonial appanage, surrounded by his faithful tribe, claiming a descent of more than thirty centuries.'"

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* "British India," Vol. ii., p. 18.

The *religion* of the aborigines differs entirely from that of the Hindoos, except in those cases where they have borrowed from or adopted Hindooism. But the worship of the aborigines is not the same all over India; on the contrary, that of one district is usually different from that at a little distance from it, while others are identical in religion, though those tribes professing it have been at war from time immemorial. This only points to the fact that these now severed tribes were at one time on terms of friendship, or are parts of one race or petty nationality.

Their religion seems, however, to have improved in course of time. Originally snake worship was very prevalent amongst them. The Najas of Cashmere, who were converted only about 200 years ago, were snake-worshippers. The ruder tribes still worship stones, the sun, trees, the bamboo,* tigers—in fact, anything. Some of the ruder southern Indian tribes worship a deity called Bata, represented by a stone kept in every house. In southern India four or five stones may often be seen in the ryot's fields, placed in a row and daubed with red paint, probably intended to represent blood, which they consider as guardians of the field, and call the five Pandus. The god of each Khond village is represented by three stones, and in the Deccan are groups of sacred stones.† In this worship of inanimate objects the aborigines are not lower than the Hindoos, unless, indeed, they copied it from their ruder neighbours. Dubois tells us that in India—and he is speaking chiefly of the Hindoos—"a woman adores the basket which serves to bring or hold her necessaries, and offers sacrifices to it; as well as the rice-mill, and other implements that assist her in her household labours. The carpenter does the like homage to his hatchet, his adze, and other tools, and likewise offers sacrifices to them. A Brahmin does so to the style with which he is going to write; a soldier to the arms he is going to use in the field; a mason to his trowel; and a labourer to his plough." ‡ Amongst the Badagas, anything will become an object of adoration if the head man of the village or a priest should take a fancy to deify it. But little respect is showed to such easily acquired gods: "liar," and other opprobrious epithets, are frequently applied to them.§

Animal worship is widely spread, and admits of some curious illustrations, but the instances which we have given will suffice; indeed the religion of most of the aboriginal tribes is little removed from fetishism; they are also "devil worshippers." Human sacrifice was at one time alarmingly prevalent amongst them. These "Meriah sacrifices," as they are called, are found

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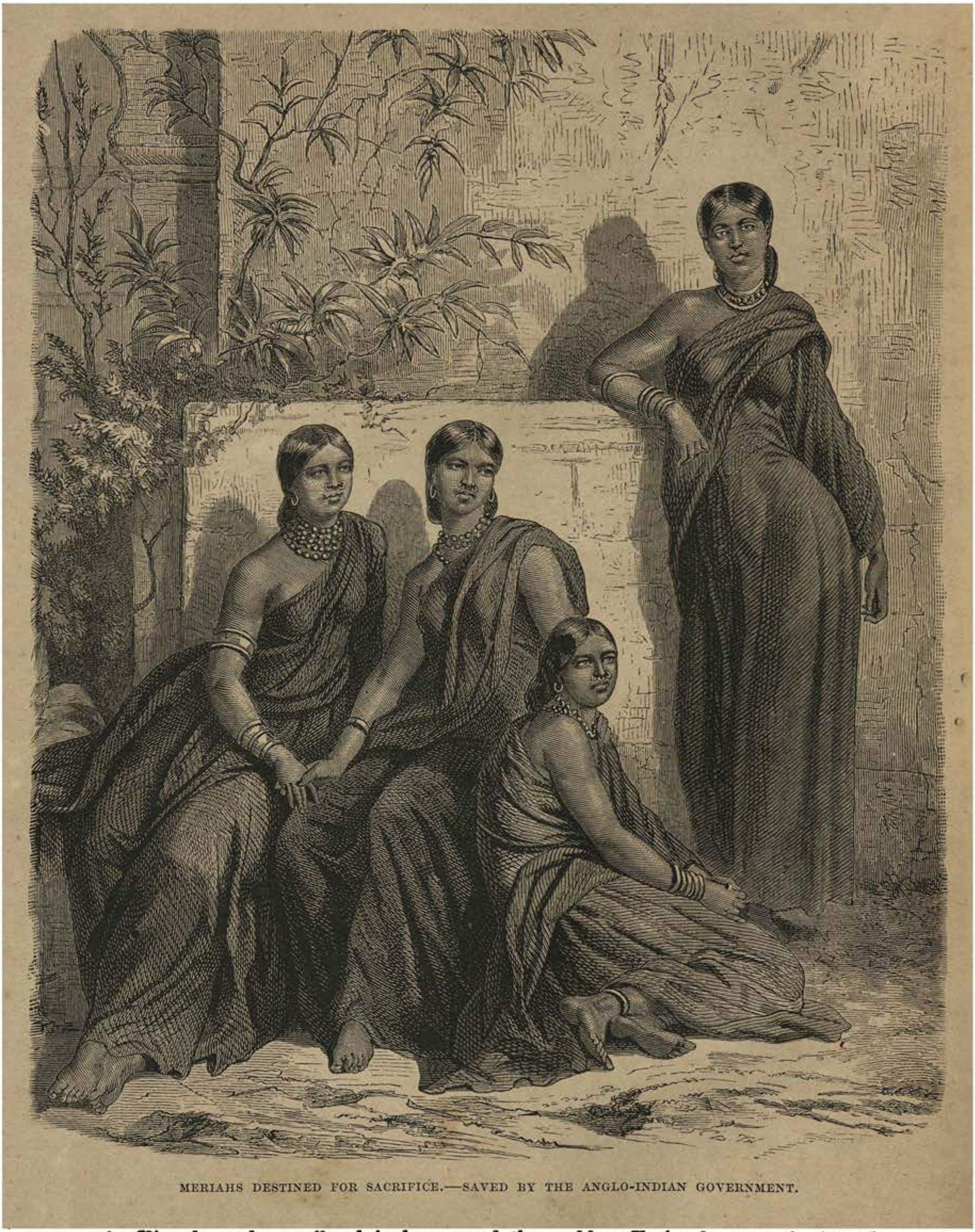
* Lewin's "Hill Tribes of Chittagong," p. 10.

† Colonel Forbes Leslie's "Early Races of Scotland," Vol. ii., pp. 462, 464, 497.

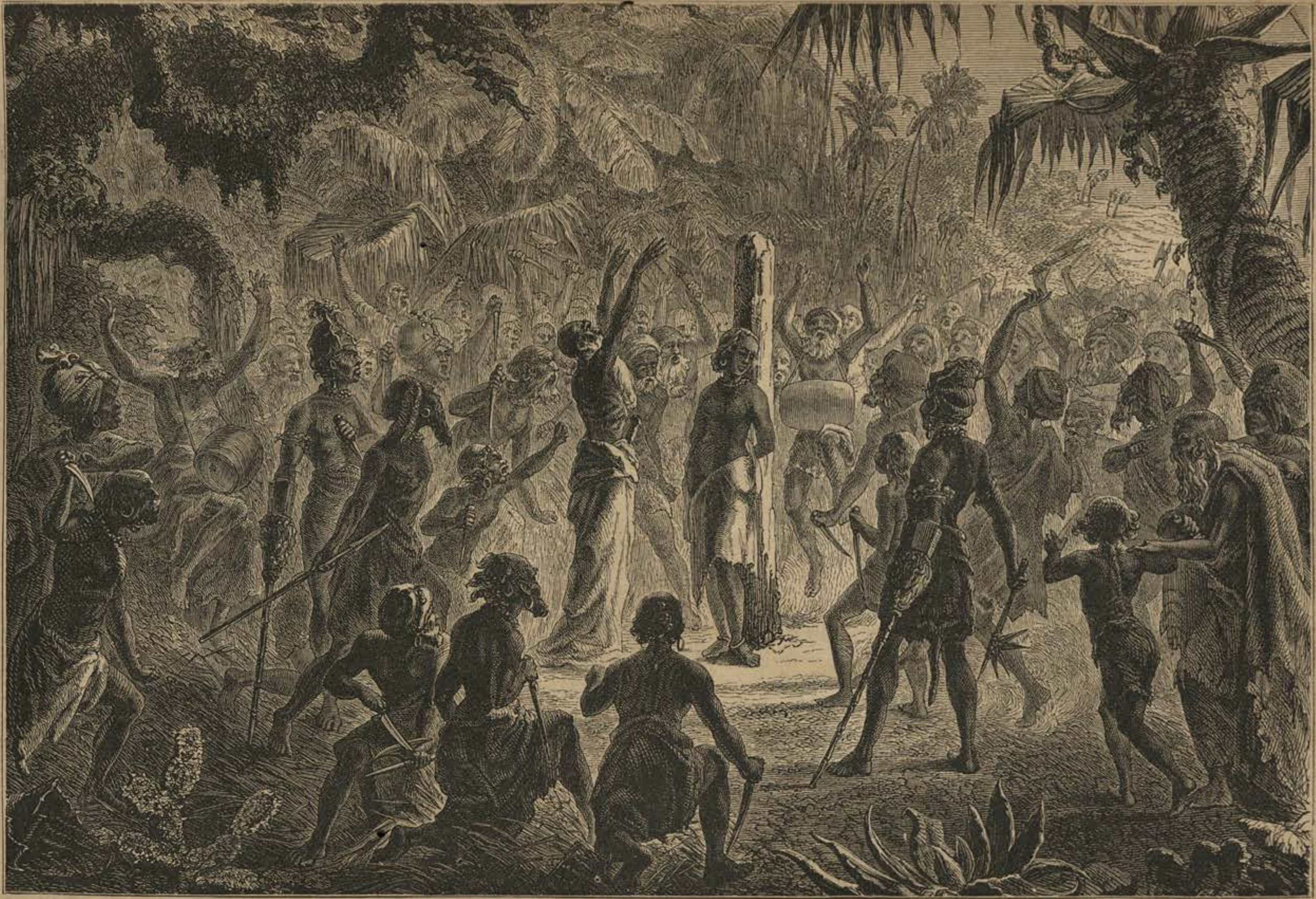
‡ Forbes' and Kaye's "People of India," p. 373.

§ Metz, "Tribes of the Neilgherries," p. 60.



MERIAHS DESTINED FOR SACRIFICE.—SAVED BY THE ANGLO-INDIAN GOVERNMENT.

among the Khonds, and are offered in honour of the goddess Tari, who was the introducer of cultivation and the arts, but which blessings she bestowed only on the condition that she should receive sacrifices of human beings, which constituted her daily food. They take place



MERIAH SACRIFICE.

periodically on special occasions, but are also offered up on behalf of individuals anxious to divert the wrath of Tari. The victim may either be bought or born a victim, or the parents may consecrate it in childhood as a sacrifice to the bloodthirsty deity. During the years in which the victim has to look forward to his fate he is treated well, indeed almost loaded with honours, and considered sacred. Sometimes he will be allowed to marry, and even to die a natural death, but over his children hang the fate which the sire escaped. At any time they may be called upon to become Meriahs. With a high-sounding and dramatic ritual, in grandeur and awful beauty surpassing, in Mr. Ludlow's opinion, the pathos of the Greek tragic poets in kindred situations, the victim is called upon to meet his fate. We cannot spare the space necessary to give the whole ceremony, but those interested in it will find a full account by Captain Macpherson in the "Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society" for 1852. "The form of the sacrifice is no less awful than the ritual. Fixed against a short post, in the midst of four larger ones, the victim's chest or his throat is fitted into the rift of a branch cut green and cleft several feet down. Cords are twisted round the open extremity, which the priest and one or two elders then strive with all their might to close; the priest then wounds the victim slightly with his axe, and the whole crowd throws itself upon the sacrifice, and strips the flesh from the bones; the possession of a strip of flesh insuring participation in the merits of the sacrifice. Tari Pennu is then invoked: 'You have affected us greatly; have brought death to our children and our bullocks, and failure to our corn, but we do not complain of this. It is your desire only to compel us to perform your due rites, and then to raise us up and enrich us. Let our herds be so numerous that they cannot be housed; let children so abound that the care of them shall overcome their parents, as shall be seen by their burned hands; let our heads ever strike against brass pots innumerable hanging from our roofs; let the rats form their nests of shreds of scarlet cloth and silk; let all the kites in the country be seen in the trees of our village, from beasts being killed there every day. We are ignorant of what is good to ask for: you know what is good for us, give it to us.'" I have spoken of the victims of the masculine gender; females are, however, often Meriahs. The group on p. 296 represents some victims rescued by the Anglo-Indian Government from the fate which was awaiting them; and on p. 297 is portrayed the scene attending the sacrifice of a female Meriah, some of the details of which differ slightly from those described in the text as being usual on such occasions.

They have also an abiding belief in magicians. For instance, they consider that if they pierce little clay images to which the names of particular persons are attached, or mutilate these images, a corresponding injury is inflicted on the person represented, a belief which we have seen to be widespread (Vol. i., p. 128).

The *character* of the aboriginal tribes of India is varied, and even there we find a difficulty at arriving at an exact estimate of the good or bad qualities of any particular tribe, so varied are the opinions of travellers who have resided amongst them in regard to their character. One officer will describe a tribe as everything that is good, while another, as much, or, perhaps, as little able to judge the character of a people, will paint them in colours so black that it is scarcely possible to believe that it is the same people of which he is speaking.

General Briggs characterises them as, on the whole, faithful, truthful, and attached to their inferiors; remarkable for indomitable courage, and ready at all times to lay down their lives for their superiors. The aborigines of the Carnatic were the Sepoys of Clive and Coote, and fought bravely at Plassey, a battle which laid the foundations of our Indian Empire. As pioneers and engineers they have distinguished themselves not only in India, but in Ava, Afghanistan, and in the defence of Jellalabad. In the Bengal army, owing to the contempt for them that exists among the Hindoo and Mohammedan sepoys, an unjust feeling of distrust has grown up against them. Among themselves they have no caste scruples. They will serve as readily on board ship as on land, and on the deck are as faithful as they are in the field. With a mind unshackled by any of the deep-rooted religious prejudices of the Hindoos or Mohammedans, they afford a promising field for the efforts of missionaries, which is only now beginning to be entered on. The few rebellions of the hill tribes have been made the occasion for smart young officers making military and political capital of them. The real facts rarely come forward, and a people, whose loyalty and good behaviour in the midst of a treacherous race—like the native Mohammedans or Hindoos—deserve well of the English Government, have, on the contrary, been treated in a harsh, if not unjust, manner by the Indian officials. Our revenue is exacted in India, not as under the native kings, in kind, but in money. Now, money is scarce, if not unknown, in the ruder districts ; "hence that frightful curse of the Indian mofussil (the provinces are distinguished from the capitals), the village money-lenders or *shroffs*—sharp Hindoos or Mussulmans—who 'accommodate' the cultivator with coin to meet the Sahib's (Englishman's) demand at rates of interest which appear to us perfectly fabulous. The main grievance of the Sonthals was that the Bengalee *shroffs* charged them 300 or 400 per cent. for money—they were willing to pay 25. They admitted that they had no complaints to make of the 'Sahibs' personally, but with rough logic said that the 'Sahibs' were masters, and that it was their business to prevent such things. So they rose against the English, and massacred them right and left, until cut to pieces by the troops." Such is the history of the "Sonthal rebellion."

In other instances our conduct is open to criticism by logicians more strict than the hill men of India. "In many cases," writes Mr. Ludlow, "the inveterate habits of plunder which distinguish the more warlike amongst them bring them into forcible conflict with our authorities, as was the case with the Bheels of western India. In others their traditional faithfulness to the duties of hospitality brings upon them the weight of our revenge. They give refuge to some Hindoo prince whom we have declared our enemy, or 'refractory Zemindar' whom we seek to seize. Such was the case with the Gonds of Central India, and the Khonds of Orissa. Troops are sent against them ; and on scaling the mountain frontier, are perhaps 'surprised to see, expanded before them, an extensive and fertile tract of country, covered with flourishing villages, and richly cultivated,'* as we are told of Goomsur and the country of the Khonds in 1836. In other instances the mode of an introduction is different. Some day or other, an Englishman, led by the love of sport, curiosity, or by the mere desire to breathe a purer air, is led to explore the hill range, and is brought into contact with its tribes. A report is made to Government; and then, if the new people appear peaceful and friendly—above all, if their haunts appear to include tracts of fertile land capable of yielding revenue—they are gradually 'brought under the blessings of our rule.' These blessings the wild men at first realise in the shape of taxes, which they never paid before, in exchange for which they receive the privilege of 'British justice,' which means, that of having their disputes decided, their offences punished, by an official native or European, out of their own territory, who, in most cases, does not speak a word of their language. Such blessings they are in general barbarians enough not to appreciate, especially when they come accompanied with mixed swarms of locusts and scorpions, who invariably follow in the English civilian's train—native officials and native money lenders. After a time, if they are not victimised and submissive, and thoroughly capable of being ruined by inches, they break out into what is called rebellion. Then the military are let in upon them; then come those 'smart affairs,' which are Godsends to many a young officer, especially in peace time, as bringing his name forward, in which villages are burned, stretches of country laid waste, large bodies of 'insurgents'—half armed, or even unarmed creatures, huddled together, often as much from fear, or even for submission, as for resistance—routed 'with great slaughter' by a handful of Sepoys. If, however, the 'insurgents' belong to the more warlike tribes; if their hill fastnesses be too hard to penetrate; if their country be too sterile to be worth the cost of subduing to the regulation pattern of modern 'good government,' halcyon days now generally dawn upon them. They are decidedly unfit for 'the full blessings of our rule.' They are placed outside the pale of 'The Regulations,' *i.e.*, the enactments of the Supreme Council in Calcutta. They are handed over to some enterprising English officer, civil or military, but often the latter, as 'Special Commissioner.' Sometimes, when the considerations which prompt the establishment of the Commissionership are obvious from the very first, this stage may often precede the other. The 'Commissioner' is a man, and not a system; somewhat above the common most probably, to have accepted the arduous task of governing savages, who lives amongst them at any rate, learning to speak their language,

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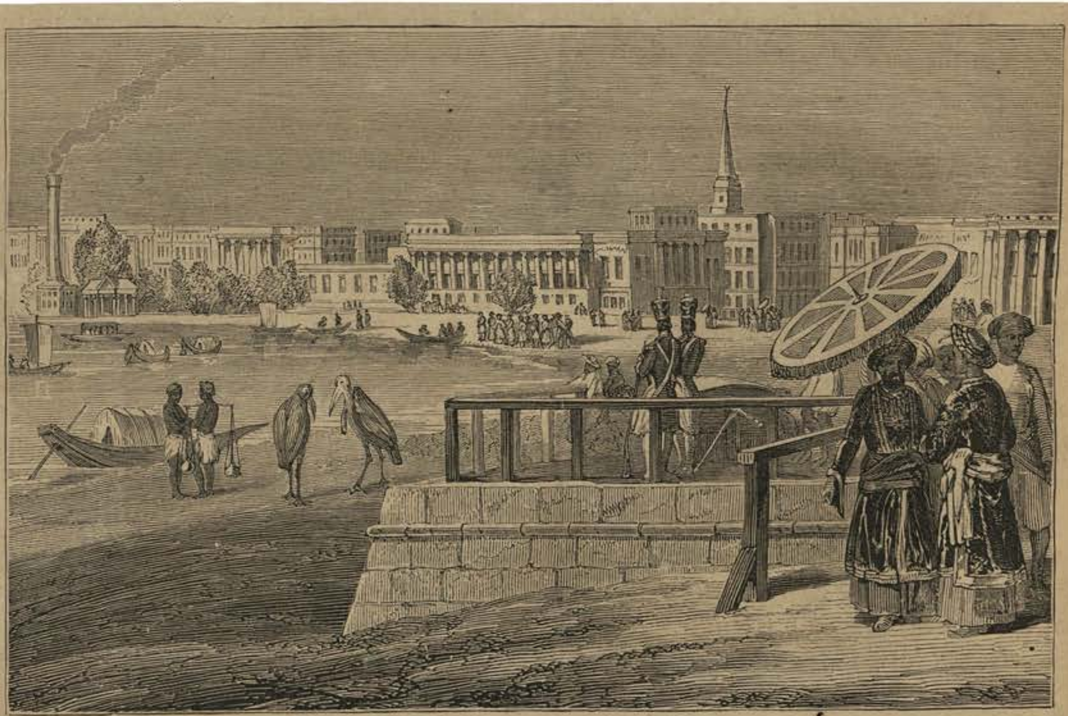
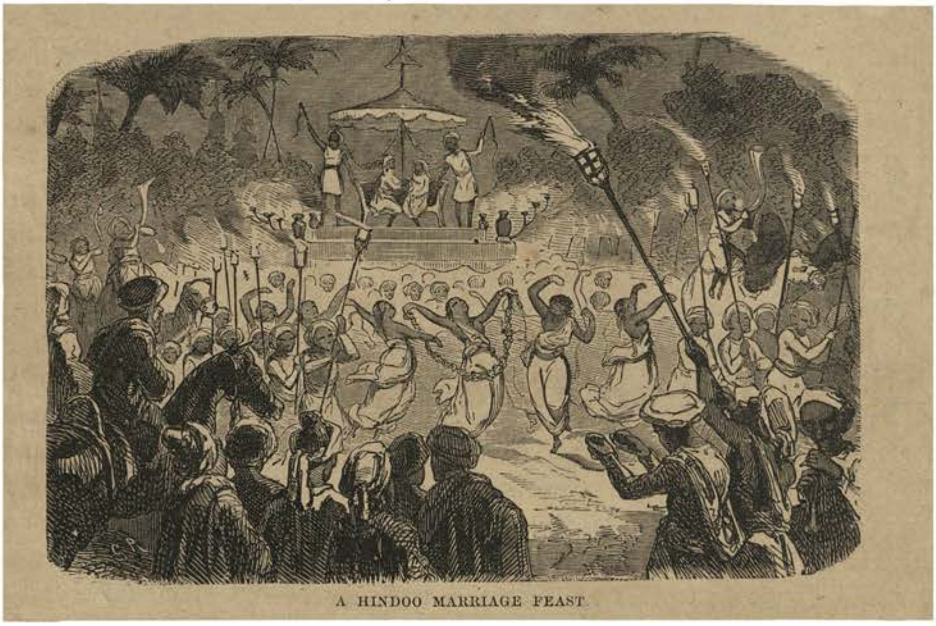
* Taylor and Mackenna's "India," p. 363.



CALCUTTA IN 1845.

and becomes familiar with their customs. There is not an instance on record in which, if the Commissioner be anything of what he ought to be, the poor savages do not turn out capable of the utmost improvement. From Cleveland, the civilian of the last century, in the Bhaugulpore hills, through Sir John Malcolm among the Bheels of Malwa, to Colonel Dixon on the borders of Rajpootna, the peaceful triumphs of these Commissioners are among the brightest instances of our rule in India. Unfortunately, the stage of Commissionership is but temporary. The great standard of civilisation for the Indian Government is, capability of paying taxes. The life's devotion of heroic Englishmen is only a means to this end. When it is supposed to have fulfilled its purpose, the 'Regulations' are introduced; sometimes successfully, sometimes not." This is strong language; but I have the testimony of many eye-witnesses and participators in the task of introducing the "blessings of our rule" to the Indian aborigines, that it is not exaggerated, and is only too correct an account of the general system—or rather want of system—which we have adopted with the rude tribes with whom we have come into contact in colonising the waste places of the earth. Wherever we have come into contact with the savage he has suffered in prosperity, and deteriorated in morals. Nor are the aborigines of India an exception to the rule. The Todas, for example, once one of the best of hill tribes, have now got thoroughly corrupt since their home in the Neilgherry Hills has become a summer sanatorium for the Calcutta people. The warlike Nyrs (Nairs) of Malabar, "whose word was their bond half a century ago, are now almost as slippery as any Bengalee."


A HINDOO MARRIAGE FEAST.

The Hindoo faith is spreading among them in preference to the Christian. Every Bheel, Gond, or Kohlie who acquires power or money desires, we are told, to be thought a Hindoo rather than a "Mletcha" (or outcast). Many have embraced the Mohammedan faith. Last of all, the native tribes of India have this grand characteristic, which carries so many noble qualities along with it, viz., an undying love of freedom. The Hindoos, on the other hand, look upon them with horror. Every day they see them infringing what they have been accustomed to look upon as the most sacred rules of caste. The Brahmins, who to their many other indifferent qualities unite unequalled powers of vituperation, accordingly lavish upon them all the opprobrious epithets which their all too copious vocabulary furnishes. All this is borne by the native tribes with great equanimity, until a member of the sacred caste falls into their hands, when the heaped-up wrongs of centuries are partly expiated by the Brahmin being sacrificed on the altar of the dire "Tari Pennu!"

Having thus sketched out shortly the general characteristics of the aboriginal tribes of India, let us in the rest of this chapter make a few brief observations on the chief of these numerous tribes, without, however, attempting anything like a philological or other classification—a task almost as hopeless as it would be useless to the reader.

KHASIAS.

This tribe, which is one of several inhabiting the Khasia Hills of Eastern Bengal, is a specimen of one of the great peaceable tribes of Indian hillmen. In all they number about 70,000 souls, and are in many respects an interesting race. In a paper by Lieutenant Steel, R.A.,* we have an account of them so full in many respects, that in the following summary we will closely follow him. The Khasia people form a remarkable contrast to the Bengalees of Silhet on the one hand, and to the tribes of the Assam valley on the other side. Mongol is the prevailing cast of countenance, and their skin is fair, and their hair strait and black. Their voice is clear and distinct, and their cries, as they call to one another long distances from hill-top to hill-top, can be heard far away echoing among the valleys. In sound it strikes one near as being like the "coos" of the Australian natives. Evil spirits are more believed in and conciliated than good ones, but in Lieutenant Steel's opinion the Khasias do not care for either. Yet they are innately truthful, and can appreciate honest and upright dealings in others. They are, however, very superstitious, and believe greatly in omens. One of their methods of looking into the future is by breaking eggs on a board, and in the disposition of the various pieces of shell and the yolk of the egg divining the coming events, which, according to the soothsayer, take this method of casting their shadows before. A waist cloth, and a small garment over all, like the smockfrock of the English labourer, constitute their very simple dress. Earrings and necklaces of gold, the latter often mixed with coral, which they prize very highly, are common amongst the women. Bracelets of silver, weighing five or six ounces each, but never anklets like the Hindoos, are also worn by the females, who are fond of dress and finery. The women occupy themselves in carrying loads, tilling the rice-fields, fetching wood, drawing water, and in household affairs. Some of their customs are very peculiar. When a child is born the whole village congregate and assist at this interesting event. The marriage ceremony is of the most primitive type. All that is necessary is for the couple to sit together on one seat and receive their friends, to whom they give a marriage feast. A union so easily contracted is just as easily dissolved. The woman receives five cowries which she throws away; they are then free to be married again, the children remaining with the mother. Divorce is, however, rarely resorted to, unless for some very grave offence. Wife-beating is unknown, but, with the progress of civilisation, it may be expected, with some similar "blessings of our rule," to be introduced in a place so benighted as the absence of this method of uxorial discipline seems to imply.

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* "Journal of the Ethnological Society," Vol. vii., p. 305. By some philologists, the Khasias as well as the Garrows (p. 304) are considered to be Thibetans.

If twins are born one is usually killed. The house belongs to the woman, and if the husband dies or separates from her, then it remains her absolute property.* The dead are burned in every instance, the relatives standing round and howling while the corpse is being consumed to ashes. In the month of March grand dances are celebrated in honour of the new moon. "They assemble in certain places, when a ring is formed, the girls standing two and two in the centre, facing outwards, in no particular order; they then move slowly round from left to right, the whole mass of them in twos, with a sideling step, such as soldiers make in 'closing' right or left, with eyes fixed on the ground. The young bachelors run round the outside of the ring, waving fans made of feathers; outside them again come the ring spectators, old married men and women, with children too young to be married. Rude music is played the whole time, and the spirit of the proceedings is kept up by frequent and deep potations on the part of the male dancers and musicians. The whole is of an orderly character, and never degenerates into an orgie. The demure looks of the girls, some pretty enough, and the ardent glances of the youths as they pass round and peep slyly at their lovers, are amusing enough, and make a pretty picture. The dress of the girl is silk throughout, and the ornaments are of gold and coral, all but the crown, feather, and bracelets, which are of silver."

Some of the men and women are "perfect marvels of muscular development," carrying great loads of grain in baskets, by means of a strap passing round their foreheads. Among the Jynteahs, a tribe allied to the Khasias, the baskets are neatly lined with india-rubber, so as to be waterproof. The Khasias are all very fond of chewing a mixture of betel-nut, pán leaf, and lime, the result being that it acts as a stimulant, enlarges the lips, and altogether deforms the mouth. In honour of their dead they raise monuments, which are comprised of large upright stones, generally put up in some conspicuous place, such as the top of a hill or near to some village or wood. Near the villages are grown considerable crops of rice, and some skill is shown in irrigating the fields. Native ores are smelted by themselves, and made into various weapons and utensils.

As a rule the Khasias are courageous, and considering what wretched weapons they possess fight well behind a stockade. They carry on a considerable trade in lime and oranges, but this trade was originally begun by Europeans, and is not an aboriginal industry. Dried fish they are very fond of, and their method of fishing is decidedly aboriginal. Lieutenant Steel thus describes it:—"At one of the rapids above (on one of the streams at the foot of the hill) an immensely deep pool, full of large fish, they built a dam of stones, and at intervals on this placed baskets of cane filled with *cocculus indicus*. The fruit is about the size of a walnut. Of this they pounded an immense quantity, and let the water carry the juice into the pool. The fish became stupefied in about five hours, and, rising to the surface, were swept down the stream into large receptacles formed of stones; next morning they were taken away up the hill to be dried, to the amount of 600 maunds, or more than twenty tons. About 200 men were engaged in this work."

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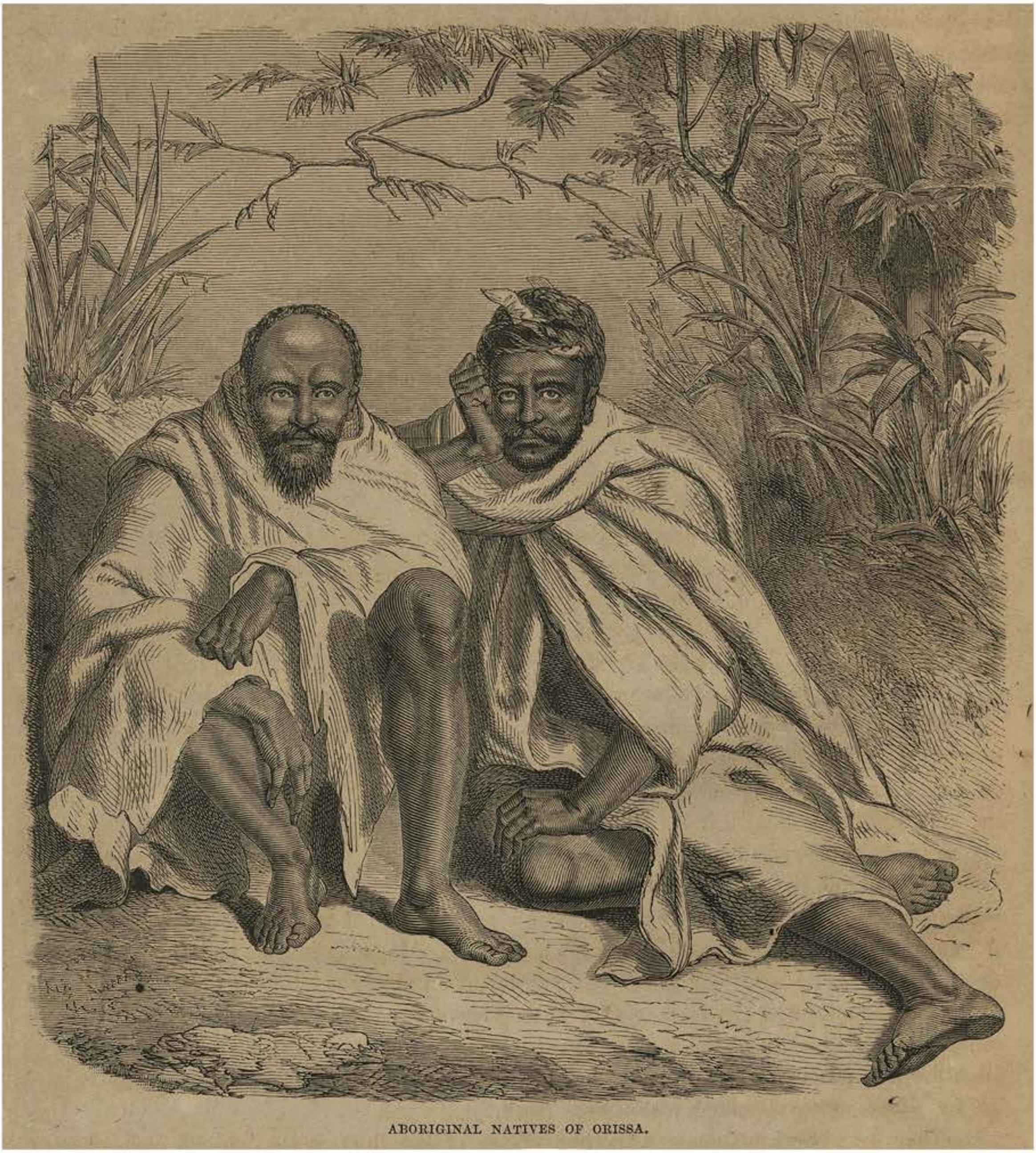
* A curious fact for philologists is that the Khasia word for fir and tree is the same, and that tree and house have also the same or almost the same word to express them. Perhaps hollow trees constituted the primitive abode of the members of the tribe. Von der Gablentz (*Grammatik und Wörterbuch der Kassia Sprache*, 1858) shows that the Khasia language has no affinity, as has been supposed, with the T'hay or Siamese language.



ABORIGINAL NATIVES OF ORISSA.

GARROWS.*

Under this name are comprised a number of wild tribes whose proper home is the north-eastern frontier of Bengal and of Assam, but who are now confined within rather narrower limits. Cotton is the staple commodity of their country. This article of trade they dispose of in the Bengal markets, but are subjected to great extortion, fraud, and falsehood by the native officials and middlemen through whom much of their business is transacted. On the other hand, the presence of an armed force is generally necessary while these ferocious mountaineers are in the market. Until recently it was the custom to keep a large "body of matchlock men, with matches ready lighted, continually parading round the market, who ever and anon discharged a matchlock to remind the savages that they were on the alert. But for this precaution, the Garrows, on the slightest misunderstanding, would rush to arms and massacre every merchant within their reach."

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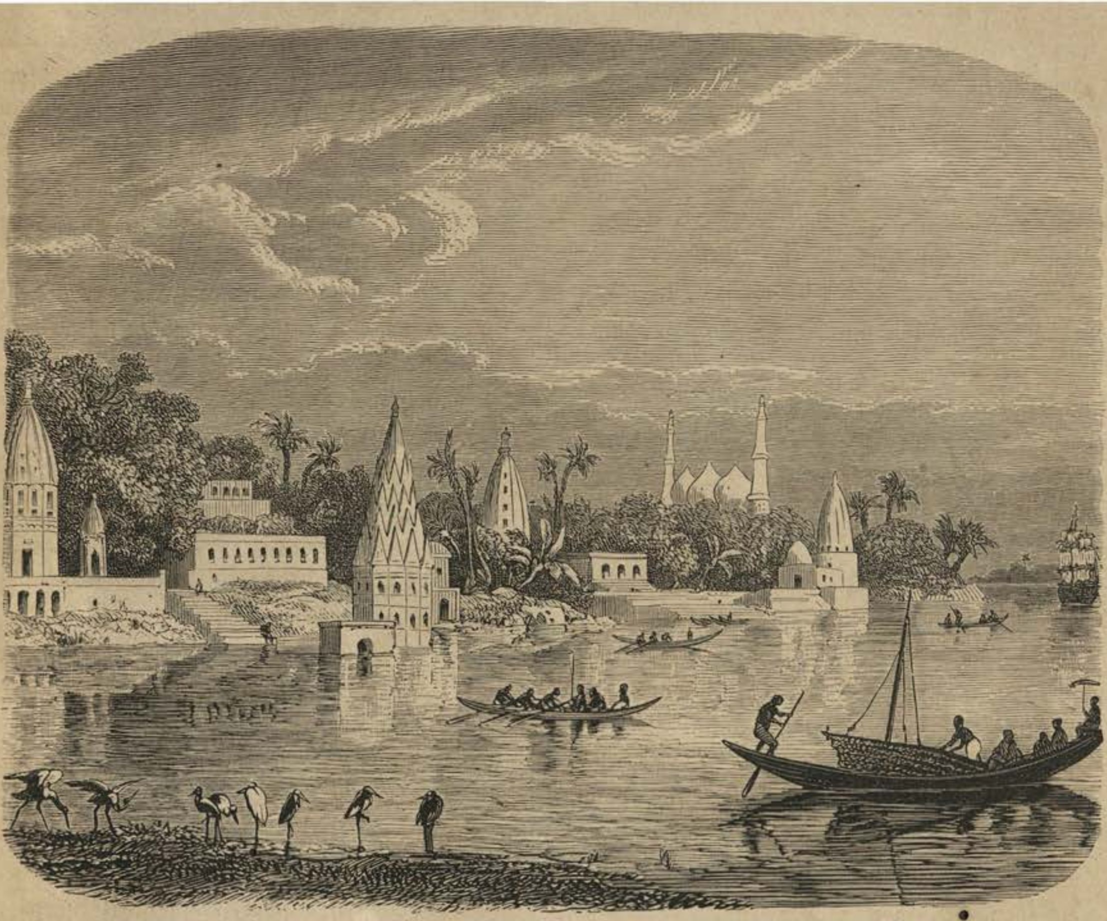
* Often spelled Gâros.



BANKS OF THE GANGES.

They are a short but muscular people. Some of the chiefs are handsome men, courteous and gracious in their manners. The women are strong, and being early accustomed to carry loads, are able to transport packages of goods which the weakly Bengalee man would fall down exhausted under in a few hours.

In their food the Garrows are omnivorous. Cats, dogs, frogs, and snakes are eagerly eaten, but milk in every form they execrate, believing it to be diseased matter.

Among themselves they are quarrelsome and revengeful. When one Garrow has had a difficulty with another, the weaker, to avoid the vengeance of his antagonist, flies to the most inaccessible places he can find in the mountains. "But from this moment the feud becomes desperate; each of them now plants a certain tree, and binds himself by a solemn vow to devour the head of his enemy with the juice of its fruit. Such an individual, as sometimes happens, failing to accomplish this vow during his own lifetime, the feud descends as a heirloom to his children. But the day of vengeance at length arrives. The antagonists encounter, and the weaker, or least fortunate, bites the dust. The victor then cuts off his head; and having, with this ingredient and the before-mentioned tree made a palatable soup, invites all his friends to a banquet, in which this soup is the principal dish. After this the tree is cut down, the feud being ended. When the victory has been gained over any of their lowland neighbours, the proceedings are somewhat different. Numbers collect round the reeking heads, which are borne towards the hills in triumph, having been scooped out and filled with liquor and food, while the savage conquerors move along in the procession with dances and songs of rejoicing. The skulls are then buried in the earth. When the flesh is supposed to have fallen off they are exhumed, cleansed, and suspended as trophies in the houses of the victors. Thus prepared, they become the circulating medium of the country; but as they are very highly valued, can only be used in large payments. The bodies and bones of their own dead are burned to ashes, lest by any accident the skull of a Garrow should be passed off for that of a Bengalese. The skulls are valued in proportion to the rank of the person to whom they belonged. In 1815 the skull of a Hindoo Zemindar [farmer of the revenue] was valued at 1,000 rupees [£100]; that of Talook'hdar [landowner] at 500 rupees; while a mere peasant's skull would not pass for more than ten or twelve rupees. The upper classes in Bengal would perhaps forgive the Garrows, were they somewhat less punctilious in their respect for the distinctions of rank." * So endless are these domestic feuds, that in each tribe there is a particular chief whose sole duty is the terminating of these intestine troubles. Murder—as might be expected from so peppery a race, each man of which wears a sword—is common. Dishonesty is almost unknown, and as falsehood is punished with death, it is not likely to be a very marked characteristic of the Garrow. Drunkenness, with its concomitant quarrelling and bloodshed, is the most common vice.

Their religion is obscure. They have neither temples nor images of their gods, though they believe in the transmigration of the soul. They make offerings to a bamboo, with all its branches fixed in the ground, and decked with flowers and tufts of cotton, placed before each house. Of the art of weaving, so common among the hill tribes, they were until recently entirely ignorant, and had accordingly to purchase all their cotton and other cloth in the Bengal bazaars. The southern Garrows differ in many respects from their brethren in the north. Though stout, well-formed, and industrious men, they are not so well favoured. Their countenances are ill-boding, and their noses flat and negro-like; a wrinkled forehead, large mouth, thick lips, and a round, unintelligent face, are only the characteristics which call for remark. Like the northern Garrows, they eat all kind of food, and even bake the blood of animals over a slow fire in hollow green bamboo. The flesh they devour almost raw. The drinking of intoxicating liquors they indulge in to excess; even a child, as soon as it can swallow, has raw spirits poured down its throat. They raise considerable quantities of grain, but in seasons of scarcity they live on the pith of the *kebul* tree, which contains a large quantity of starch.

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* "The Hindoos" (Library of Entertaining Knowledge), Vol. ii., p. 104.

Yams are also cultivated by them. Their houses, which are from 30 to 100 feet in length, are raised several feet from the ground on piles, and are roofed with thatch, or with mats and long grass. The house is divided into two compartments: one is left unfloored, and is occupied by the cattle; at the other end is a platform where the women sit, work, and gossip, and on a similar platform open above the children play. These houses are filthy in the extreme. Vermin abound, and all the filth of the family descends through a trap-door, where, however, it is soon cleared away by the hogs, who constitute the only scavengers known among the Garrows.

Otherwise the character of the southern Garrows is good. They bear the reputation of being mild, honest, truthful, and faithful, but easily swayed either by joy or grief. Men, women, and children on mirthful occasions give themselves up to drunkenness and dancing, until they soon are huddled together in one chaotic mass on the floor of the "ball-room." Their method of dancing has been thus described: "Twenty or thirty men, standing behind one another in a row, hold each by the sides of their belts, and then go round in a circle, hopping first on one foot and then on the other, singing and keeping time with the music, which is animating, though harsh and inharmonious. The women likewise dance in rows, but hold out their hands, at the same time lowering one and raising the other, as the music beats, and occasionally turning round with great rapidity. The men also exhibit military exercises, like the barbarians described by Xenophon, with sword and shield, which they use with grace and great activity. These drinking festivals continue during several days, after which they grow sober by degrees. In these violent fits of intoxication, quarrels and assassinations, so common among their brethren of the north, are said to be unknown."

Marriage is arranged by the young couples themselves, but if the parents refuse their compliance, the friends of the lovers assemble and beat them into compliance! It may be remarked, however, that instead of the bridegroom courting the bride, the custom is reversed. She seeks out her husband, and gives a feast to her friends on the day fixed for the marriage. After this, her friends carry the bride to the river and bathe her. The whole party then move to the bridegroom's house. On seeing the procession he affects to hide himself, but this is only a colourable pretence, for he soon allows himself to be caught, and, like the bride, carried to the river and bathed. His parents have now their turn. Raising an unearthly funereal howl, they seize on their darling son, and pretend to wish to retain him by force. The mock resistance over, the ceremony is completed by a cock and hen being sacrificed, the whole winding up with a drunken savage feast. In this curious ceremony the reader will see the remains of that ancient and very widespread idea of marriage by force. In this case, however, it is the man and not the woman who is supposed to be forcibly united in the bonds of wedlock. The Garrows are divided into "Maharis," and a man is not allowed to marry a girl of his own "Mahari." This is a widespread law in India, and prevails very commonly among primitive people.

The body of a dead person is kept in the house for four days, after which it is placed in a boat-shaped vessel on the top of the funeral pile, which is erected within a few feet of the deceased's house. The pyre is lighted by the nearest relative at midnight, the company meanwhile dancing, drinking, and making merry. The corpse consumed, the ashes are then buried in exactly the same spot on which the pile was lighted. Over this sacred spot a small thatched hut, surrounded by a railing, is erected, and inside the hut a lamp is kept burning for a month, or longer. The wearing apparel of the deceased is hung on poles fixed at each corner of the fence around the building. These, after a certain time, are broken, and allowed to fall to decay or go to pieces. This is the rite to which the body of the meanest of the tribesmen is treated. But if the deceased has been a man of rank, his funeral pile is decorated with flowers, cloth, and the head of a bullock, which has been sacrificed in honour of the occasion, and all of which is buried along with the body. When a petty chief is the person whose obsequies are being celebrated, the head of one of his slaves is cut off and burned with him; but in the case of a chieftain of high degree, something more is expected. In this case the slaves of the dead man sally out in a great body into the plains below, seize upon a Hindoo, cut off his head, and burn it with the body of their late master. The graves of these dignitaries are also frequently decorated with flowers, and the images of various animals, the religious significance of these emblems not being known, at least to Europeans.

Their primitive religion is now greatly modified, by reason of certain gods from the Hindoo Pantheon having been introduced into it. For instance, they worship the goddess Siva, as well as the sun and moon, and sacrifice to them bulls, goats, hogs, cocks, or dogs. The chief of their gods is supposed to reside somewhere in the mountains. When taking an oath they first salute a stone, then, in a solemn manner, "with their hands joined and uplifted, their eyes steadfastly fixed on the hills," they call on Siva, or Mah-â-dêva, as they style her. Still more solemn is the oath, if a tiger's bone be placed between their teeth; while another gradation of the affirmation is solemnised by holding a quantity of earth, or in other cases various weapons, in their hands. Death is the punishment meted out to murder, adultery, and robbery, while minor offences are, as among civilised nations, expiated by fines; the fines, however, among the Garrows are put into a common fund, which is spent on a tribal debauch. In the war councils the women enjoy an equal voice with the men. Charms are held in great respect. A serpent's skin is, for instance, considered a certain remedy for external pains, while a tiger's nose is suspended round the neck of a woman in the pains of childbirth. In illness they offer up sacrifices to their deities, but yet are not ignorant of the medicinal properties of certain herbs growing in their native mountains, and even of the more occult principles of medicine. For instance, they have from time immemorial practised inoculation. A species of madness, akin to the European "were-wolf," is found amongst them. The persons afflicted with this strange insanity on being first seized tear their hair, and the rings from their ears with such fury as to break the lobes. They then shun all society, and wander in moody melancholy through the wildest and most secluded places in the country. It is probably a form of *delirium tremens*, or at least in some way the effect of continued or repeated fits of intoxication, and not due, as the Garrows think, to some medicament applied to the forehead.* Dwelling intermediately between the Khasias and the Garrows is the small class called Migams or Langams, who speak a dialect of their own. Most of them live under the rule of an official known as the "Seem" of Nongstoin, and frequent the "haths" or market-places of the last-named state. In dress and custom they are like the Garrows. Like them they cultivate cotton, but on the other hand they never intermarry, and have little or no intercourse with them.

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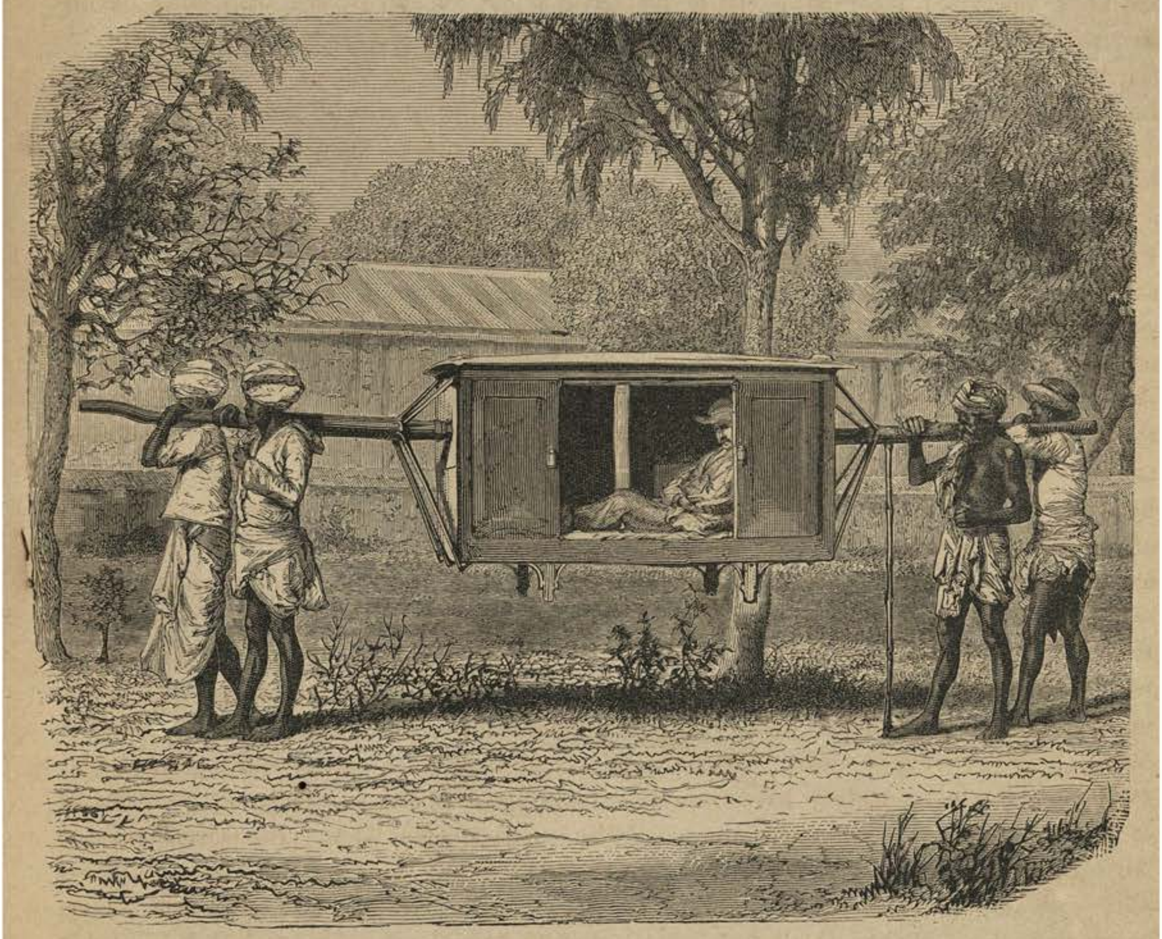
* Goodwin-Austen, in "Journal of the Royal Geographical Society," 1873, p. 2.

They are a quiet, civil people, and, like the Khasias, whose habits they in some respects possess, build their houses two or three feet from the ground. Their funeral ceremonies are not like those of the Khasias, but the Bodo, and unlike the first-named tribe, they do not erect the monolithic monuments over their dead.*

KOOKIES.

The Kookies, or Lunctas, are wild people who dwell in the mountains north-east of the Chittagong province. Except when visiting the markets to purchase provisions, they are rarely seen in the plains. Though comparatively little is known of their habits, they are always believed to be the wildest and most savage, as they are the most vigorous and active of the mountaineers of the eastern frontier. In features they resemble the natives of Eastern Asia. Their eyes are small, their faces broad and round, and their noses decidedly flat. The term "Luncta" means naked, and has doubtless been applied to them owing to the scanty wardrobe



HINDOO PALANQUIN.

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* "The Hindoos," Vol. i., p. 109; Hamilton, "Description of India," Vol. ii., p. 756; "Asiatic Researches," Vol. iii., p. 21.

of the men; for the women wear a short apron, and both sexes in cold weather protect their bodies from the elements by a sort of sheet thrown round them.

All the little tribes of which the Kookies are made up are hunters and warriors, but acknowledge the authority of three different rajahs, whose power, except over their own immediate followers, is limited. Over these, however, they exercise absolute sway. The rajahs are distinguished from their subjects by having a slip of black cloth around their loins, and by their hair being brought forward in a bunch over their forehead. Their subjects, on the other hand, are deficient in the breech cloth, and wear their hair down their backs. The women of the rajah's family are in like manner distinguished by having a black petticoat bordered with red. Black is throughout this tribe the royal colour. Their houses are erected as close together as possible, and are raised above the ground. For purposes of defence, their villages are often erected on the side of steep, almost inaccessible mountains, and are protected in front by bamboo palisades. Day and night the entrances into these mountain villages or forts are guarded, and the entrance of any stranger is always viewed with the suspicion engendered by a long course of intertribal wars. Every class is in fear of the other. Ambuscades and bloody encounters are of frequent occurrence, and tend to perpetuate these tribal feuds. Stratagem, it is almost unnecessary to say, they, like all savages, prefer to open assault. When an attack on an enemy's village is determined on, all preparations are made with the greatest secrecy. The warriors travel by day silently, and by the least frequented paths. When night overtakes them they swing a kind of hammock under the branches of the thickest trees, in such a manner as to be unobserved by the enemy's spies, if even they passed underneath. Hence probably has arisen the story that the Kookies live in trees. The attack inevitable, they rush upon the enemy with loud shouts, striking their spears against their shields, and in the conflict spare neither age nor sex, unless some childless or slaveless man may wish to preserve some one to adopt as his son, or to serve as his slave. If victorious, they return in triumph to their villages laden with the heads of the captured; but if on the contrary their attack has been unsuccessful or disastrous to them, they "seek their homes in silence, with the utmost privacy, and live in disgrace until some successful act of valour retrieve their character." Their valour has never been much protection to them, however, from the *Banyoghis*, a less numerous, but a more united people. So thoroughly have they been cowed by this warlike tribe, that two of their rajahs pay to it a tribute of salt, an article which here, as in many other parts of the East, is held as almost sacred, and a messenger bearing it is treated something after the manner which in civilised countries the bearer of a flag of truce is. Their moral character is not high. Expertness in stealing is, next to valour, esteemed the highest qualification of which a Kookie can be possessed; and, unlike what is the law in other tribes, where theft is a capital offence, if one man succeeds in robbing another undiscovered, he cannot reclaim his property unless by means the same as that by which he was deprived of it. If the thief be detected in the act he receives the ridicule of the village, but no other punishment. Vindictive in their disposition, they extend this rather objectionable trait in their character even to the lower animals. If a tiger kills a member of the tribe, all the men sally forth in pursuit of it. If it be slain, the family of the person who has been killed by the tiger make a banquet off the flesh in revenge. But if the general hunt be unsuccessful in affecting the death of the animal, the injured family is bound never to cease until a tiger has met its death at their hands. Until this is done, and a banquet of tigrine flesh served up, the rest of the tribe look upon the family of the tribesmen thus unavenged as in a state of social ostracism. Again, if a man be killed by the falling of a tree, all his family assemble, cut it to pieces, and scatter the chips to the four winds of heaven, at the same time heaping the vilest imprecations on the inanimate object of their fury. If they have to desert their villages owing to any reason, they burn their dwellings, lest their *gayals* or ghosts should return to them.

Agriculture is a science of which they are not ignorant, but they cultivate the ground in a very rude manner, producing therefrom merely a few different kinds of grain, root, and vegetables. The men, however, take little part in this labour, deputing most of it to the women. Wild honey, which is found in immense quantities in the woods, and wild animals, form the bulk of their food supplies. It may also be remarked that owing to the chronic state of warfare in which they live, they are frequently subjected to famines, owing to their food supplies being cut off by their vigilant enemies.

Polygamy is not permitted among them, though concubinage is tolerated. Adultery is punished with death. Unlike other aboriginal Indian tribes they are "endogamous" as it is termed, *i.e.*, the custom we have frequently referred to—that no man may marry within his own tribe, or, as in this case, his own "Keelis," or little clan (in other words, "exogamy") is not the rule. This express exception to a common rule may have arisen owing to the desire to strengthen their tribe by the exclusion of "foreign" women, and sympathies for any clan, such as would have been sure to have arisen had the introduction of wives from other, and it might be unfriendly tribes, been permitted. The writer on "The Hindoos," whom we have already quoted, but whose anonymity prevents us expressing to him by name our obligations throughout these pages for many of the facts which he has carefully collected and collated, from authors little known or accessible, thus describes a Kookie courtship, marriage, and burial:—"When a youth desires the hand of a virgin in marriage, the proposition is made by his father, who, on being questioned on these points by the father of the girl, replies that his son is a brave warrior, a good hunter, and an expert thief; that he can produce so many head of game, and of enemies slain in battle; that in his house are such and such like stolen goods; and that he can entertain so many at his marriage feast. If, upon inquiry, the facts are found to be as stated, the marriage immediately takes place, with great feasting and festivity. The winter months, as among the ancient Greeks, are generally selected for the celebration of marriages. Funerals take place only once a year. When a Kookie dies, his body is deposited upon a platform erected under a shed at a distance from the dwelling-house, where food is daily placed before it, while some member of the family constantly keeps watch to protect it from dogs and birds. In this manner all the dead belonging to the village are preserved—in some cases during a whole year—until the 11th of April, when both the bodies and the sheds are burned. A feast is then given by the relations of the deceased in succession, until one has taken place for each of the dead. A similar custom, as we learn from Bertram, prevails among [certain of the Eastern and now almost extinct tribes of] the Indians of North America."

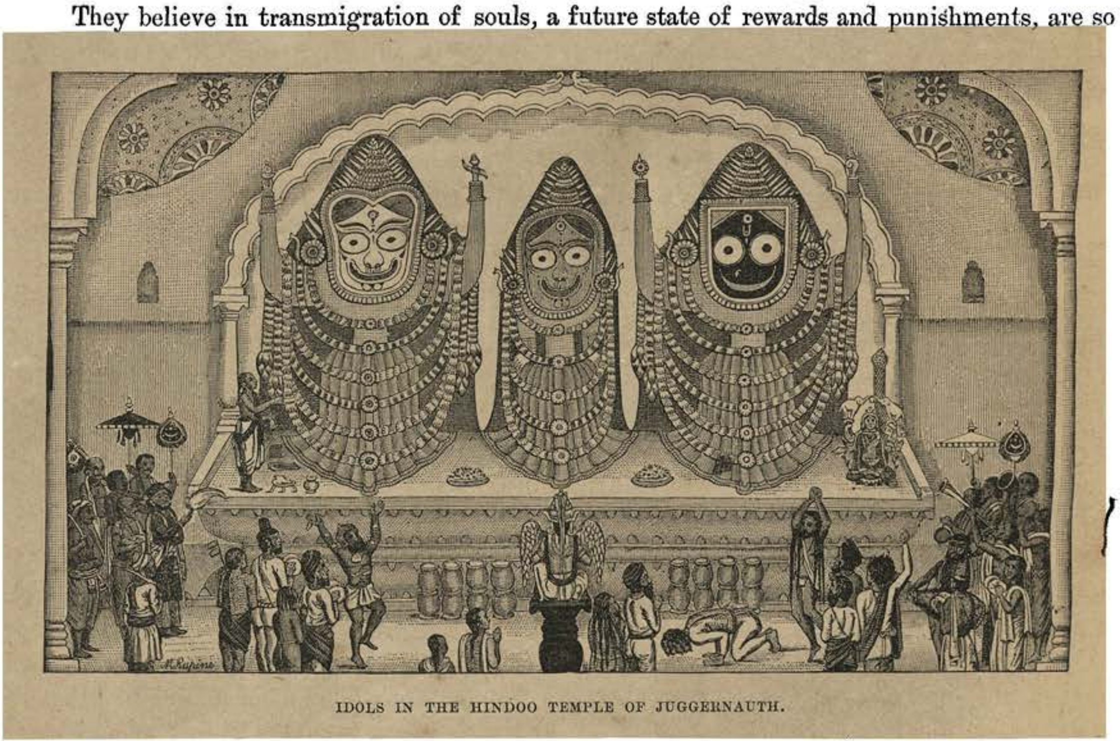
They believe in a future state of rewards and punishments, and consider that no act is more pleasing to their chief deity—whoever he is—than the slaughter of many of their enemies. They have images of their gods, and offer up animals in sacrifice, but have no priests nor temples. A native coinage is unknown; and in the account from which this is taken,* it is said that firearms inspire them with indescribable terror. They have doubtless by this time, however, learned the use of these lethal weapons.

PUHARRIES.

The Puharries, or "Muntaineers," as they are termed by their lowland neighbours, are a rude people inhabiting the Rajmahal hills of Bengal.

Their religion is humane and mild, and inculcates a system of ideas which should lead to a rather more elevated code of morals than is usually prevalent among such a wild race.

They believe in transmigration of souls, a future state of rewards and punishments, are so averse to the shedding of blood that they will not slay even a tiger unless impelled to do so by the law of a "tooth for a tooth" (the *lex talionis*), and have a kind of priest, who acts as the oracle of the tribe. These priests believe in dreams as revelations of the future, and that the deity in such visions of the night appears to them and braids their hair—in which lies their prophetic power. When applied to by their clients in any trouble, the oracular answer is delivered in the morning after a good night's dreaming, but never unless a goodly fee accompanies the request for assistance of this nature.



IDOLS IN THE HINDOO TEMPLE OF JUGGERNAUTH.

On the full moon in January this oracle, or priest (the *demauno*), like the Salian priests of Rome, affects that kind of divine frenzy so much in favour with his class all the world over, and in this condition rushes about the village, but without speaking or inflicting any injury. "By signs, which are perfectly understood, he demands from the chief of the clan an egg and a cock, the former of which he instantly devours, and having twisted off the head of the latter he sucks the warm reeking blood and throws away the body. As if inspired with madness by

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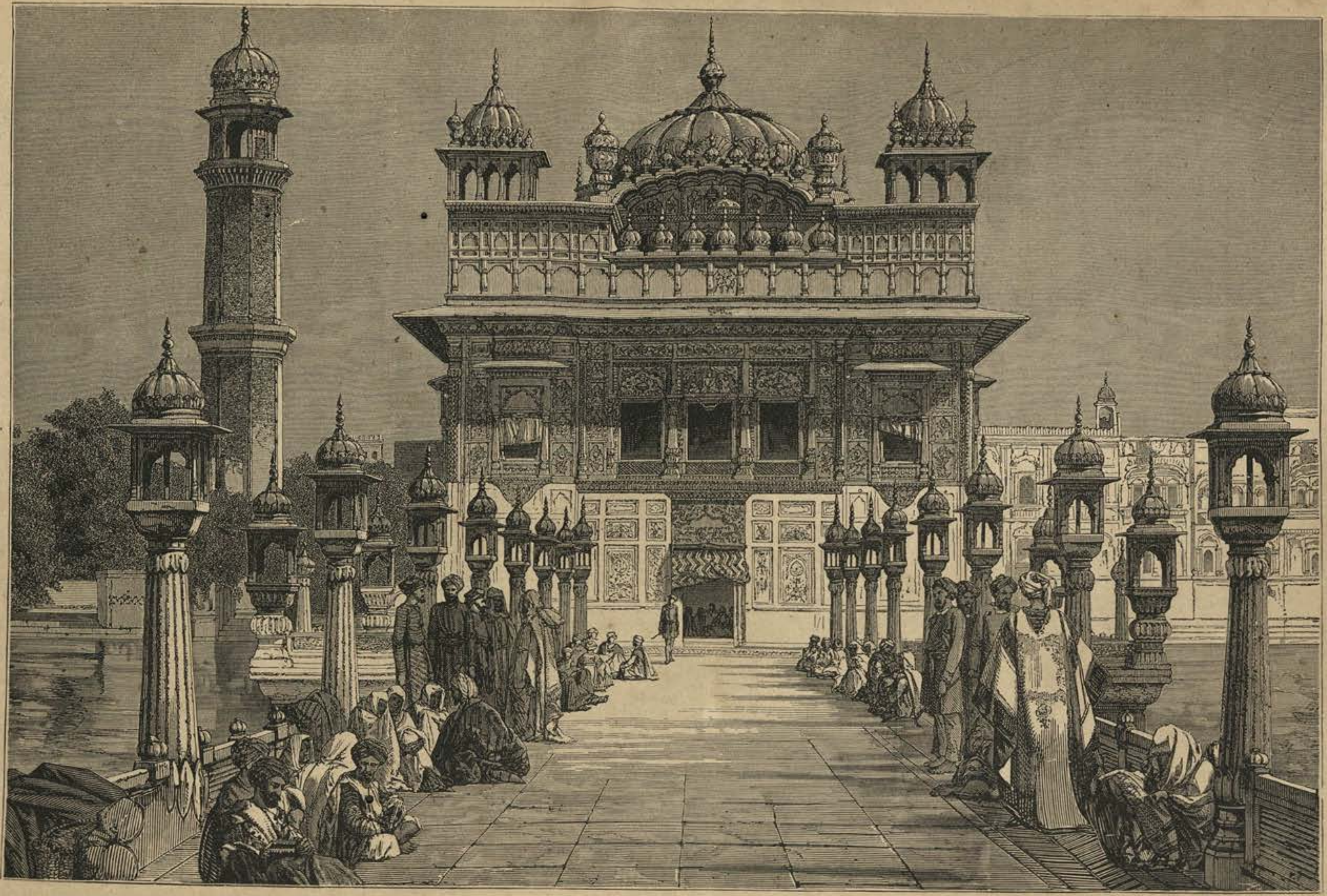
* "Asiatic Researches," Vol. vii., pp. 183-198.



TEMPLE OF AMRITSER IN THE PUNJAB.

the fumes of this horrid repast, he now disappears from among men, and conceals himself during seven or nine days in the forests or jungles by the wild banks of some unfrequented stream, where he is supposed to be fed by the deity. The tales he relates on his return, of the wonders he has beheld in these remote solitudes, greatly enhance his authority: sometimes, he avers, the spirit seated him on a prodigious snake; at others caused him to put his hand without fear into the mouth of a tiger, in fact it is just another version of the tricks, or—let us be charitable—of the delusions of the fraternity of "medicine-men" everywhere, and of which we have capital examples among the American savages, such as when the north-western "medicine-man" "makes *tomanawo*," or his brother in the plains indulges in a similar piece of mystification (Vol. i., p. 122).

Before eating, a Puharrie will always throw away a small portion of his food, and before drinking pour a libation on the ground.

Once every three years a cow is sacrificed, and the flesh partaken of by every man in the village not "disqualified by some secret uncleanliness." Contrary to the rule at most of their feasts the women appear at this bovine banquet. "The wives of the officiating priests, to whom several pieces of silk are presented, doff their garments and ornaments, and winding their long hair into a knot on the crown of the head, mark their naked bodies with a mixture of turmeric and the flour of Indian corn, and in this state march in procession through the village to meet their husbands, all the inhabitants, men, women, and children, being assembled to behold them thus." It thus appears that the honour of being a clergyman's wife is among these primitive folk attended with what would, to our ideas at least, be looked upon as dreadful drawbacks! Though ardent lovers, they are said to be chaste in their relations to each other. Polygamy is permitted. Courtship is conducted by proxy, and the marriage ceremony consists in its essentials of little more than a feast, and the father delivering his daughter to her future lord with many parental advices regarding his conduct towards her, at the same time informing him that if he murders her he may expect to hear from him in due time. A widow is handed over to the nearest relatives of her deceased husband, but if inclined she has the right to pass the days of her widowhood at her father's house. Adultery is punishable by a fine only. Witchcraft and sorcery are thoroughly believed in, and in taking an oath curious ceremonies are used. "They fix two arrows with a little salt between them in the ground, at such a distance from each other that the blade of the one, and the feather of the other being brought together above, they shall form, with the surface of the earth between them below, an equilateral triangle. The person swearing takes the blade of one and the feather of the other between his finger and thumb." Bishop Heber tells us that on very solemn occasions the stringency of the oath is still further increased by a little salt being put on the blade of a sabre, and after the words of the oath are repeated, the blade being placed on the under lip of the person sworn, "the salt is washed into the mouth of him who administers it."

The body of a still-born babe is put into a pot and buried by its father in the jungle; if the child is a little older, but still unweaned, it may be buried in the common cemetery with its head to the north, but if it has been weaned it must receive one of the chief funeral-rites, which an adult would be entitled to, viz., a banquet must be given; and this must be repeated yearly at the season after the crops are stored. If a person has died of measles or small-pox, the body is placed in the jungles and then abandoned; though in the following year a feast is given by the relatives of the deceased on that spot, when libations are poured out, and food is presented as a means of giving a reasonable quietus to the manes of the deceased. If a person dies of dropsy the body is without any ceremony thrown into the river. The body of a priest is also left unburied, under the fear that, as priests become devils after death, it might, if deposited in the public cemetery, return and destroy the village. Under the circumstances, however, he is compelled to go and play the devil elsewhere.* All other individuals are buried. A private debt is collected by the whole village assisting the injured man against the village in which the debtor lives. After the hamlet has been burnt and plundered, and the debtor carried into captivity, arbitrators are appointed to settle the question in dispute. The debtor is released and the expenses of the whole affair fall on the losing side. Often these heroic methods of collecting a debt result in a war between rival villages, and always in immense buzzle-marches and countermarches of the rival partisans, false alarms, robbery, and sometimes bloodshed.

Lastly, I may add, that some of the Puharrie women are pretty, and that the whole race bears the reputation of being brave, industrious, and enterprising. They manufacture the common Hindostanee bedsteads, and the wood-work of ploughs. Wood, charcoal, bamboos, cotton, honey, plantains, sweet potatoes, and a little grain are among the other articles which these people bring down to the plains for sale. Their cultivation of the ground is extremely rude, and is almost entirely carried on by the women, who are sturdy and well made, but toil-worn. A hard-working woman—and she need not look to marriage if she be not so—is very properly considered a treasure by her husband. He who hath such a prize has a breech cloth of clean cotton, and sitteth (metaphorically) among the elders of the land. They have proved excellent soldiers when taken into the British service, though the corps formed out of them has been of late unaccountably neglected. Instances of longevity are, however, rare amongst them.

KHATTIES.

This remarkable race of men inhabit the peninsula of Saurâshtra, or Guzerat, and are midway between barbarism and civilisation. They are, perhaps, the most important tribe in Western India, and presenting many traits of originality in manners and religion, they deserve a notice, even in the short space we can devote to the many aboriginal tribes of India. They are supposed to be the Cathæi,† who, at the time of Alexander the Great's invasion of India, lived in a nook of the Punjab, and who by their desperate valour impeded the progress of the picked soldiers of Macedonia. Since that time their history can be traced, and everywhere it is distinguished by a stern resistance to the many invaders and conquerors whom they have encountered, and by a valour worthy of a better fate than they have met at the hands of the latest of their masters. The Khattie is essentially a horseman, and in this character devotes his attention to freebooting and black mail, from friend and foe alike. He is cruel, but brave, and a more energetic individual than a typical member of this race does not exist. He is in figure tall and handsome, his frame is athletic and sinewy, but his countenance is harsh and unprepossessing.

They seem Scythians of a somewhat recent date, and when they arrived in Guzerat they displaced and reduced to slavery two aboriginal tribes, the Aheers and Babreeas, whom they found in possession. This supplies another proof, among many, that there are aborigines *and* aborigines in India, in other words that many of the tribes which for the sake of convenience we now call aborigines have under them or intermixed a still deeper stratum of native races. However, if we go into this question there are almost no autothonic races; there are no true aborigines; all so-called "native races" came from somewhere else. It is believed that they first became resident in Guzerat in the ninth century of our era. Up to 1807 they were thieves and robbers by profession, but these dubious traits of national character have perforce to be displayed in secret. Many of them are horse breeders, but will not intermarry with the Aheers or herdsmen. Taxes they refuse to pay unless forced, and except in the case of the chiefs, who compromise with their honour by allowing taxes to be levied on their lands and herds, no one pays of his own accord. Private feuds, and public wars, thin the tribes, so that at no modern period have the Khatties been numerous. Jealousy of each other and love of independence have never allowed them to unite into one strong body of men, who could be formidable to any great power. They are ruled by petty chieftains, who live in little fortresses from which they sally forth and plunder, and retreat into, to escape the wrath of their pursuers. They are excellent horsemen, and pride themselves on the superior quality of their animals; when about to engage in a predatory fight they hire mercenaries to assist them, and use firearms which on ordinary occasions they disdain to carry, though greatly fearing their effects. These mercenaries are sometimes very low-caste Hindoos, whose services they repay with the asses captured. Of the horses bred by them they only sell the stallions, retaining the mares for their own use, on account of their value in not betraying them on plundering expeditions by their neighing. Primogeniture is unknown in this tribe. All the children, the daughters excepted, inherit the parents' property alike. Though polygamy is allowed they rarely marry more than one wife. The women are celebrated throughout India for their grace and beauty, and are kindly in their disposition. They have been often known to alleviate the sufferings of prisoners, whom the men were putting to the torture, in order to force them to discover concealed treasure, or to extort ransom. The widow of the eldest brother in a Khattie family can please herself as to another union, but the widow of a younger brother, unless she declines to again enter wedlock, becomes the wife of the eldest brother. The property of a female descends with her children to her nearest relatives, even though the father is living.

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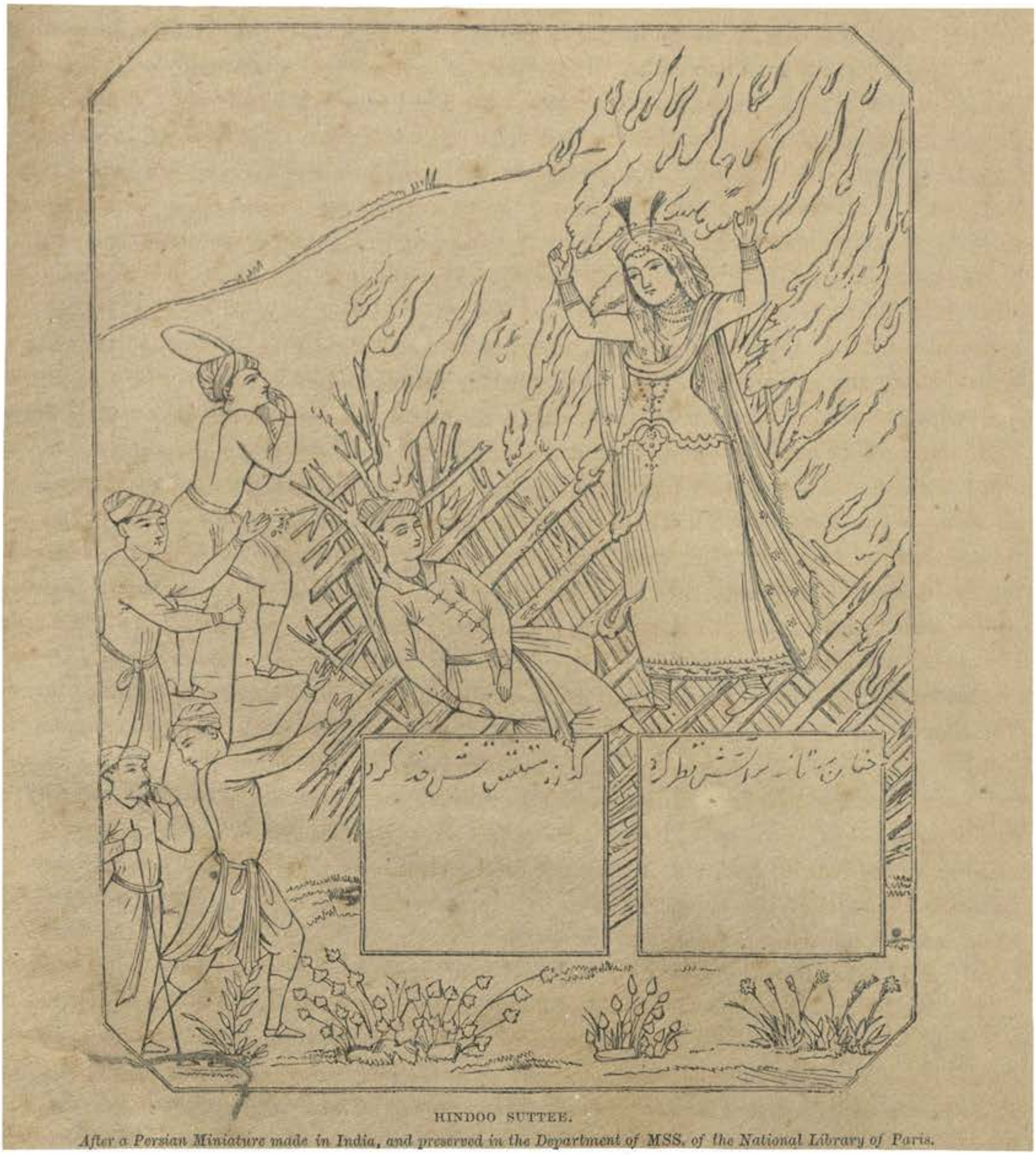
* Shaw, "Asiatic Researches," Vol. iv., p. 70.

† Arrian, v., 22.

The Khatties bear the reputation of being treacherous to each other, but they rarely betray a guest who comes to them in the guise of a supplicant. Accordingly outlaws and desperate men of every description find an asylum amongst them. They worship the sun as their chief divinity, and near Thaun they have a temple with an image erected in honour of this deity. Their priests are, however, limited in their functions to the celebration of marriage and burial rites, and perform no other religious duties. They use no form of prayer, and limit themselves in the supplications to the deity to fixing their eyes on the sun with their hands clasped, and repeating any words which might suggest themselves as suitable to the expressions of desire for the boon sought. In celebrating funeral rites they place food before the lapwings. Omens and all forms of superstition flourish amongst them. The day of prosperity is now over, their fortresses in decay, their villages in ruins, and the power and wealth of their chiefs gone.

KHOLIES.*

This is another tribe of Guzerat. Though many of them are now semi-civilised they bear character of being ferocious, brave, going about armed to the teeth, and of being unconquerable in their love of freedom, for which they have often fought. They are also reputed to be unredeemable robbers, cruel in their disposition, and the terror of the traveller who has to pass through the jungles and wilds of their country. Their depredations were the ror of the



HINDOO SUTTEE.

After a Persian Miniature made in India, and preserved in the Department of MSS. of the National Library of Paris.

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* Many of them are at present employed as labourers on the Western Coast. Hence Oriental language the term "coolie" is applied to any native labourer.

surrounding population, until the Mussulman sovereigns decreed their extirpation. Since then the remnant have been kept more in check.

There are many subdivisions of them. The *Sonthals* form one of these connections. They periodically worship—in a grove attached to every village—the Manj-ĥi-hanam, or founder of the village. There are other domestic gods, to whom are offered up rams, he goats, and red cocks, on which all the village, with the exception of the females, feast; any fragments left over being burned. Rankini is a bloody-minded female deity who must be propitiated by human sacrifices. The tiger is held in awe. A Sonthal, when he wishes to take a very binding oath, swears by its skin or head—an affirmation even more conclusive than if he swore by the gods, or by the lives of his children.

The *Ho* constitute another subdivision of the Khólies. They are agriculturists, but being unacquainted with manuring, the ground gets "exhausted," when they have to remove to a distance and break up fresh ground for their crops. Contrary to what we might expect from being so locomotive their houses are well built with strong mud walls, though their villages are small. Their dress is limited; some of them wearing but a scanty wardrobe best expressed by saying that "it is next to nothing." The women do all the hard work, while the men amuse themselves by hawking—a pastime at once business and amusement. A Ho buys his wife, through his father, for so many head of cattle, but he is very particular not to enter into the marriage state without consulting many and divers omens as auguries for the success of his wedded life. Dr. Latham, after looking over the list which Captain Tickell gives of evil auguries, wonders that a Ho ever marries at all. "It contains almost everything that either runs or flies. If a vulture, crow, oriole, woodpecker, jackal, hare, bee, snake, &c., cross behind the negotiator, there will be a death. If a certain kind of ichneumon drag a part [illegible] spider across the road, the bride will be dragged by a tiger the first time she goes out for wood or water. If a hawk seize a bird, the same. If a certain kind of vulture fly singly in front of its flock, death to one of the four parents—death to the bride's parent if the village of the bride, to the bridegroom's if his village be the nearest—death to a father if the bird be a male, to the mother if a female. If the great wood-hawk fly overhead, death to both mother and son at childbirth. Should a trunk fall from a tree, death. The dung-beetle rolling dung portends hard work and little reward. Such are a few of the evil omens. There are some good ones to set against them. Upon the whole, however, the signs of bad luck predominate." Marriages are attended by feasts and ceremonies, and there are also great ceremonies at births and funerals; but there is almost no recognised priesthood. Dead bodies are interred and gravestones placed over them, to keep down, if possible, the spirits which walk about during the day and keep in-doors at night. All this is not sufficient, and these must be propitiated by offerings made on a certain spot kept clean for them. Wicked men are born again as dogs, lizards, or pigs. *Suttees*, or widows, burnt on their husbands' funeral pyres (Fig. on p. 317) never come to life again, but remain for ever burning within pits, and come out at night "wandering about, still burning." Good men are born again into some condition different from that in which they were during the life which preceded the new one. Beyond this there is no state of rewards and punishments, and according to Ho theology this is the kind of thing which has always been, and will continue for ever and ever. Before, however, men can be born again there is a sort of purgatorial middle state where they suffer if they have been bad in this life.

When men die, their spirits go to Sing Bonga, the Supreme Being, who interrogates them as to their past lives, and judges them accordingly. If they have been wicked he whips them with thorny bushes, and even sometimes buries them in great heaps of human ordure, and then, after they have been subjected to this discipline for some time, he sends them back to be born again into the world in the form of cats, dogs, bullocks, lizards, &c., and the good man he sends back to be born a greater man than he has ever yet lived, and before he departs on this metempsychosical mission, Sing Bonga shows him heaped up in heaven all the goods he has ever given away in charity, and then returns them to him. There are, however, many other deities beside the all-potent Sing Bonga: gods of the villages, the god of married women, the god of the roads, and so on. The following is a specimen of a Ho dirge:—

"We never scolded, never wronged you;
Come to us back!
We ever loved and cherished you, and have lived long together
Under the same roof;
Desert it not now!
The rainy nights, and the cold blowing days, are coming on;
Do not wander here.
Do not stand by the burnt ashes; come to us again!
You cannot find shelter under the peepul when rain comes down.
The saul will not shield you from the cold bitter wind,
Come to your home!
It is swept for you, and clean; and we are there who loved you ever;
And there is rice put for you, and water;
Come home, come home, come to us again!"

When questioned in regard to their mythology, they answer that Sing Bonga God is the sun, and was self-created; after him the moon was also self-created. Then they made the earth, the grass, trees, rocks, and water, then the cattle, and after them the wild beasts. After this a little boy and girl were made at the bottom of an immense ravine; but as they had no houses to live in, the gods told them to take refuge in a huge land-crab's cave. In time the earth was peopled by them. Then the sun married the moon, and had four sons and many daughters. The sons lived with their father, but the combined heat of the father and his four sons rising every day was so great that the world was set on fire. The moon now begged of her husband to eat his sons, and she would eat her daughters. The sun promised, and on the moon telling him that she had devoured her daughters, he swallowed his fiery sons. The moon, however, had only concealed her daughters. On the sun becoming acquainted with this artifice, he was so enraged that he cut his wife in two, but afterwards so far repented of his act as to allow the two parts to come together again, in certain days, though in others she is again condemned to be in halves. So her daughters remained with her, and are the stars. And how all the races of the earth sprang from the twenty-four children of the pair who were originally created, and how Sing Bonga taught them all different languages, the reader must refer to Captain Tickell's paper already quoted.

After the world was peopled, God destroyed it once, with the exception of sixteen people, because of the wickedness of the race of men who had become unmindful of the Creator and their superiors.

Pigs and fowls are the chief articles offered up in sacrifice. They have no idols. At their feasts, singing, dancing, and drinking, which generally ends in a drunken orgie, prevail. When a person is sick a sacrifice must be offered up to the gods, and the soothsayer, or prophet, must be consulted. The people are divided into *kili* (which is the same as the Afghans' *kheil*, and means a clan), and no man can marry a woman of his own *kili*, or eat with a man who does not belong to it.*

The *Bendkhas* form a small tribe of about 300 people, who are half Hindoos. For instance, they worship Kali, will eat neither pork nor beef, and though they will drink water from the hands of a Ho (whose language most of them speak) they will eat with neither Ho nor Hindoo. They also burn their dead.

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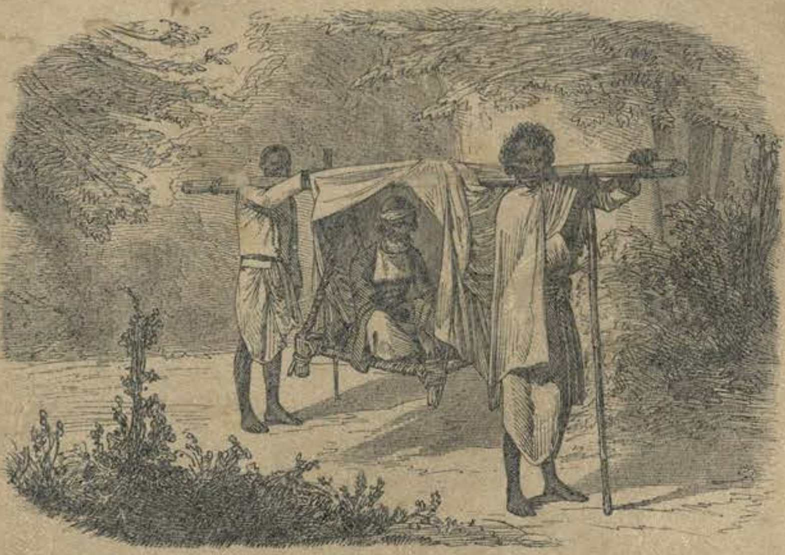
* Tickell, "Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal" Vol. ix., Part ii. Dalton, "Transactions of the Ethnological Society," 1868.



TRAVELLING IN INDIA.

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